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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VILCHEZ ASHER (Nicaragua)

later: Mr. AMARI (Tunisia)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 116: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997 (continued) (A/50/6 (Vols. I and II), A/50/7 and A/50/16)

First reading (continued)

Section 7A. Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development

Section 7B. Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development

Section 8. Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis

Section 9. Department for Development Support and Management Services

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, Mr. Mselle, to introduce sections 7A, 7B, 8 and 9 of the draft programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

2. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced the paragraphs of the Advisory Committee's report (A/50/7), corresponding to sections 7A, 7B, 8 and 9. In paragraph IV.2, the Advisory Committee noted the establishment by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), at the request of the Secretary-General, of an Office of United Nations System Support and Services, inter alia, to support the Administrator in his responsibility of ensuring system-wide coordination and policy coherence in view of the responsibility of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development in that regard. The Advisory Committee had requested that the matter be clarified and had noted that much more detailed observations on the matter had been made to the Executive Board of UNDP.

3. With regard to paragraph IV.5, the Advisory Committee urged the relevant intergovernmental bodies which benefited from the services of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development to participate much more actively in the review of the Department's programme of work.

4. In paragraph IV.6, the Advisory Committee was of the view that information should be provided to the General Assembly on the use of the $500,000 which the Assembly had authorized as a United Nations contribution to the financing of the activities of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service. As recalled in that paragraph, the General Assembly had indicated that such financing would not be used for salaries, travel and representation activities.

5. In paragraph IV.4, the Advisory Committee recommended the approval of the request for the creation of three posts for sustainable development activities.

6. It was important to monitor the steady increase in expenditures on services provided to the more than 1,500 non-governmental organizations, in order to determine whether measures should be taken to meet those expenditures. The Advisory Committee referred to that question in paragraph IV.8.

7. In that connection, the Advisory Committee welcomed the proposal to establish an Information Support Unit, which would, inter alia, assist the Department to more closely monitor the increase in the above-mentioned activities, including the mandates of intergovernmental bodies and their related activities.

8. The amount of $3,787,600 proposed under section 7B would be allocated to the three subprogrammes to be implemented by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department of Public Information. In paragraph IV.16, the Advisory Committee regretted the fact that the post of Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries had remained unfilled for an extended period and recommended that the situation be rectified as quickly as possible.

9. With regard to section 8, the Advisory Committee recommended in paragraph IV.20 of its report the approval of the four posts requested for the new Division for Micro-economic and Social Policy Analysis in the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (DESIPA). However, in paragraph IV.21, it recommended that the additional post which had been requested for follow-up activities to the International Conference on Population and Development should be provided through redeployment.

10. As for section 9, paragraph IV.27 referred to the procurement services which were being undertaken by both the Department for Development Support and Management Services and the Department of Administration and Management. In that regard, the Advisory Committee questioned the need for two procurement services and recommended that the Secretary-General should review the situation with a view to merging the procurement services in the two Departments and ensuring appropriate coordination with other United Nations procurement services.

11. The proposals referred to in paragraph IV.26 had been the subject of extensive debates; the Advisory Committee, as indicated in the corrigendum to its report, had not taken a position on the resource requirements related to those proposals.

Section 7A. Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development

12. Mr. AMARI (Tunisia) asked the Secretariat for information regarding the legislative mandate under which the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), at the request of the Secretary-General, was authorized to establish an Office of United Nations System Support and Services, inter alia, to support the Administrator in his responsibility to assist the Secretary-General in ensuring system-wide coordination and policy coherence. He likewise supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation contained in paragraph IV.4 of its report (A/50/7).

13. Regarding paragraph IV.6, dealing with the United Nations contribution to the financing of the activities of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service, his delegation supported the Advisory Committee's proposal that, before the General Assembly approved the request of $500,000, the Service should submit a report on the use of the amount contributed. He also recalled that, during informal consultations, he had already requested clarification regarding travel by some members of subsidiary bodies, such as the Advisory Committee and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), and regarding travel by members of non-governmental organizations.

14. Mrs. RODRÍGUEZ ABASCAL (Cuba) regretted that resources allocated for section 7A should have declined by 15.1 per cent against the budget for the biennium 1994-1995, given the priority accorded by the Organization to most activities conducted by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. Although activities connected with preparing and holding the world conferences had ended, it was still necessary to conduct complementary activities; the level of funding allocated was not sufficient to carry out all the programmed and related activities resulting from the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

15. Paragraph 7A.2 of the proposed programme budget (A/50/6/Rev.1) stated that the principal responsibility of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development was to provide support for the central coordinating functions, among other activities. In that connection, she noted that, as indicated by the Advisory Committee in paragraph IV.2 of its report, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), at the request of the Secretary-General, had established an Office of United Nations System Support and Services, inter alia, to support the Administrator in his responsibility to assist the Secretary-General in ensuring system-wide coordination and policy coherence. Her delegation, like that of Tunisia, wished to know how the Secretary-General was mandated to instruct the Administrator of UNDP to carry out that function, and what repercussions the Administrator's new activity would have on the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. In her view, two structures were being created to carry out practically identical functions.

16. The 15.1 per cent reduction in resources allocated to the Committee for Sustainable Development was disproportionate to the increase in resources allocated to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and her delegation wished to know how that situation had arisen. She supported the proposal regarding establishment of one P-5 and one P-4 post for the follow-up to the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, contained in paragraph 7A.59 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

17. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Russian Federation), responding to the observations made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph IV.5 of its report regarding the importance of intergovernmental review of the entire programme of work of the Department for Social Policy and Sustainable Development, particularly with a view to reducing the volume of documentation, said that his delegation considered it both possible and necessary to reduce that volume without affecting the activities of the programme or mandates. Such a measure would not only make it

possible to rationalize the work of various bodies, but would also permit major savings to be made.

18. On the subject of the estimated $500,000 United Nations contribution to the financing of the activities of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service, his delegation shared the Advisory Committee's opinion that before the General Assembly approved the request of $500,000, information should be provided regarding the use of the amount contributed. As stated in the Advisory Committee's report, those funds should not be used for salaries, travel and representation activities. Therefore, he would like the representative of the Secretariat to inform him of the purpose and destination of those funds.

19. Regarding the matter of more rational and efficient organization of the activities of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service, he stated that the Advisory Committee had been informed that the Service would continue to provide support and assistance to major United Nations system conferences, forums and events such as Habitat II, the Ninth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Food Summit to be held at FAO headquarters. Since such organizations already had an established system of public information and liaison with non-governmental organizations, thought might be given to whether activities were being duplicated and funds expended unnecessarily. He welcomed the initiative to create an Information Support Unit, provided it concentrated on collection, coordination and dissemination of information, which tasks were of vital importance during the current stage of the Department's activities.

20. Mr. GOKHALE (India) noted that the total budget for the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development had been reduced; while he understood that the reduction was connected with the disappearance of certain stand-alone activities, primarily major international conferences, he noted that travel expenses had also been eliminated. He pointed out that the purpose of the Department was to coordinate policies, and that accordingly, it could not operate effectively without close contact with other intergovernmental bodies on policy issues. His delegation therefore considered that the travel budget initially proposed by the Department should be restored.

21. He shared the Cuban and Tunisian delegation's interest in knowing exactly what new functions the UNDP Administrator was to perform. In that connection, he recalled that the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development had been established in 1992, apparently because there were policy coordination problems, and that an Assistant Secretary-General post had also been established for that purpose. The Secretariat had explained that the Administrator's task was to provide personal support to the Secretary-General but he wondered whether a function of a personal nature could be carried out in an organization composed of Member States.

22. India supported the recommendations formulated by the Advisory Committee in paragraph IV.4 of its report regarding establishment of posts to strengthen the capacity of the Division for Sustainable Development and to carry out follow-up activities to the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

23. During recent discussions in CPC, it had been agreed that an increase in the Department's budget would be proposed in the event that the General Assembly decided to establish new mandates and legislative activities, particularly in the context of the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. His delegation requested the Secretariat to indicate what measures it considered should be adopted in that connection.

24. It was not clear whether the organizational chart provided by the Secretariat reflected the current structure of the Organization, or its structure under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 if the Committee accepted all the Secretariat's proposals. For instance, it was not possible to ascertain the whereabouts in the Department of Political Affairs of the 43 new posts relating to preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping, and the same was true in other parts of the organizational chart. As a result, he urged the Secretariat to furnish further information and to indicate clearly what the current structure was and which posts it sought to establish or eliminate, since in the absence of such information, his delegation would not be able to participate constructively in the informal consultations.

25. Mr. FATTAH (Egypt) agreed with the views expressed by the representatives of India, Tunisia and Cuba, and expressed his concern regarding the scant resources available for such an important Department. The fact that the international conferences were over did not mean that there should be any change in the resources allocated to the economic and social spheres: on the contrary, they should be increased in order to be able to implement the recommendations emerging from those conferences.

26. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh) said that, because Bangladesh was a developing country and, more specifically, among the least developed, it considered the section to be of great interest. He reiterated his reservations with respect to the reduction in the budget for the important United Nations activities it covered, and supported the statements of the representatives of India, Cuba and Tunisia.

27. The interest of Bangladesh focused not on the Department as such, but rather on the management of its activities. No other department concerned itself with sustainable development, and those activities did not end with the holding of a conference or an administrative action. The Department should also take responsibility for implementing the recommendations adopted. His delegation did not understand how a budget could be drawn up in which no resources were provided for giving effect to the recommendations adopted by at least two or three of the most important conferences, whose goals had focused on development activities and the developing countries in particular. He wondered if the United Nations had the intention of carrying out those important activities, which were, moreover, provided for in the Charter of the United Nations; or whether it believed that it was enough just to hold international conferences. Although UNDP was one of the intergovernmental organizations with responsibility for development activities, there were many other issues on which the international community had made recommendations over the course of the latest conferences which UNDP could not implement alone. Therefore, it was necessary to allocate funds for such activities, in the interests of the development of the whole world, and in particular of the developing countries.

28. Mr. HAMID (Sudan) joined with other delegations in stating that the resources assigned to the section should not be reduced. Activities in the economic and social spheres were directly linked to the interests of the developing countries and future sustainable development. Therefore the budget estimates should not be reduced, so as not to produce a negative impact on such activities.

29. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that, indeed, as shown in table 7A.1, resources had been reduced by $7 million. That did not mean that priority was not being assigned to the Department. In paragraph 7A.9 of the proposed programme budget, the factors explaining the reduction were listed. First, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change would have a separate secretariat from the end of 1995, so that the Department would no longer be responsible for providing secretariat services. Those activities would be financed outside the United Nations programme budget, which would represent a reduction of some $3 million in the amount allocated to the Department. Another important element was the number of conferences held during the biennium 1994-1995: the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. The appropriations allocated for the preparation and holding of those conferences, which had amounted to some $4 million, would not be renewed. A reduction of $600,000 had also resulted because of services that would no longer be provided to the World Food Council. Taking into account the costs which would not recur in the coming biennium, it had been possible to include the new follow-up activities to the world conferences and to request additional posts for their implementation.

30. Many objects of expenditure, including travel, related to one-time expenditures; that also resulted in an apparent reduction in resources, but did not mean that the Department would receive less resources than it did currently for the execution of its programme of work.

31. A reduction of one General Service post had been decided on in the context of increasing the efficiency of the Secretariat. That was possible through rationalization of the relevant functions.

32. As for the policy coordination function, no change had been made. That would not prevent the Secretariat from taking other measures to strengthen programme coordination, including operational activities or emergency assistance, for example. The Secretary-General, naturally, had the primary responsibility for coordination, but additional support was also required.

33. Mr. HALBWACHS (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to the representative of Cuba, said that additional funds were requested for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, as it was expected that in 1996 it would hold an additional three-week session in order to deal with the backlog in considering reports submitted by States Parties.

34. The reduction in resources allocated to the Commission on Sustainable Development was based on an analysis of costs over the past two years.

35. With respect to the Non-Governmental Liaison Service, written information would be provided before the informal consultations.

36. The organizational chart had fulfilled the request of the General Assembly. A chart had been prepared reflecting the budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997, and it could be seen that all the new posts and reclassifications were explained in footnotes. Post reductions had not been included, but could be included in the future.

37. With regard to intergovernmental consultations, the calendar of conferences would be reviewed in order to find an opportunity to hold more extensive consultations with specialized intergovernmental bodies before preparing the proposed programme budget for submission to the Committee on Programme and Coordination, the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee for their consideration.

38. Mrs. RODRÍGUEZ ABASCAL (Cuba) repeated her question regarding the mandate given for the establishment of an Office for United Nations System Support and Services and asked what General Assembly resolution had established the new functions of the Administrator of UNDP.

39. Mr. GOKHALE (India) asked if the Secretariat intended to allocate additional funds for activities arising from the decisions taken at the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. He also requested clarification of the organizational charts, which did not explain to which departments the new posts would be assigned. For example, it was not clear to which divisions or units of the Department of Political Affairs the 43 posts for preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping would be allocated. For proposals for the creation of new posts to be examined, delegations should know the units to which they would be added. The footnotes did not explain that, and it was very difficult to discuss the matter under those conditions.

40. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that no legislative mandate was needed from the General Assembly to administer and strengthen the coordination of system-wide economic and social activities. The mandates of the Department and UNDP had not changed. The latter had responsibility for coordinating operational activities, and the Administrator assisted the Secretary-General in that respect.

41. With respect to follow-up activities to the world conferences, in those cases where a concrete mandate existed but resources were insufficient, additional resources had been requested in the proposed budget. However, those activities for which no specific mandate existed had not been included in the budget. Some additional posts were included for activities related to sustainable development, including those concerning small island developing States. Additional posts were also included for follow-up activities to the Cairo Conference, under section 8. With respect to the Beijing Conference, the post of Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women had been reclassified to the D-2 level. As for the specific measures adopted in the Beijing Platform, such mandates or activities as strengthening of coordination in the United Nations system in that area had been agreed upon. The resources

requested for those activities would probably be insufficient, and the Secretariat was proposing a request for additional allocations.

42. The Secretariat had not prepared organizational charts before, and thus, they might be imperfect and might not provide all the information desired by delegations. Nevertheless, as far as the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development was concerned, it was indicated that additional posts were requested, and no major restructuring would take place compared to the previous biennium. In cases where a significant restructuring had occurred, as in the Department of Political Affairs, the organizational chart could be drawn up in a different way to facilitate comparison between bienniums.

43. Mrs. RODRÍGUEZ ABASCAL (Cuba) said that she was not satisfied with the Controller's reply. Since the General Assembly had assigned the coordination functions to the Department in resolution 47/212 B, the Secretary-General ought to have had the consent of the Assembly before assigning new functions to the Administrator of UNDP. It was for the General Assembly to decide on that very important political issue.

44. Ms. ALMAO (New Zealand) said it was her understanding that at the recent meeting of the Administrative Committee on Coordination the executive heads of the specialized agencies had established four task forces with specific responsibility for the follow-up activities to the international conferences held in the last few years, with the exception of the Beijing Conference, for which the relevant working group would be set up once the General Assembly had studied the Platform for Action. Her delegation wished to know if more information would be forthcoming in the informal consultations on the decisions of the Administrative Committee on Coordination with respect to follow-up activities to the conferences, as consideration of the question would benefit from more background information.

45. The CHAIRMAN said that the relevant additional information would be given. If there were no further comments, he would take it that the Fifth Committee had completed the first reading of section 7A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 and that it had decided to refer the matter to the informal consultations for further review and appropriate action.

Section 7B. Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development

46. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said that he attached great importance to section 7B of the proposed budget and noted that in table 7B.1 the Secretary-General proposed an amount of $3.7 million for activities covered by that section, and that the extrabudgetary resources amounted to almost $600,000 for the biennium. As the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had pointed out, it was a modest amount, which did not correspond to the responsibilities to be taken on in the coming two years for the recovery and development of Africa. An amount of $4 million had been spent on recent conferences and it would be interesting to know how much it had cost to prepare for and celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

47. Speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, he expressed his concern about the low level of resources and fully agreed with the comment of CPC (A/50/16, para. 101) that the General Assembly should reconsider the level of resources allocated to activities concerned with Africa.

48. On the question of the distribution of resources proposed in table 7B.1, although he welcomed the proposal to create two new P-3 posts, he thought that the resources could have been apportioned between the programmes in a way which more closely matched the priorities set by the General Assembly. He suggested that the Secretariat should reconsider the proposed distribution of resources.

49. Referring to subprogramme 1, he expressed concern, as had the Advisory Committee in paragraph IV.16 of its report, that even the limited resources being allocated could be diverted to other ends, and he asked for clarification from the Secretariat on that point. The Secretariat had to take fully into account the high priority given by the General Assembly to activities to aid the recovery and development of Africa, and it had to propose an adequate level of resources.

50. He noted the activities to be undertaken by the Department of Public Information, supported the latter's efforts to publicize throughout the world the critical economic situation in Africa and urged that sufficient resources should be allocated to it.

51. On the question of resources required under the heading of consultants and experts, his delegation supported the use of resources for activities in which the Secretariat had no expertise, but it was important to develop an in-house capability for those purposes. The resources allocated to subprogramme 3 could perhaps then be used for more substantive activities.

52. It had been repeatedly stated that the Secretary-General should be allowed flexibility in the use of resources for African recovery and development. His delegation stressed that it would support that flexibility only if the priorities which had been set were taken into account; it was not in favour of redeploying resources which had been allocated to priority activities.

53. Mr. Amari (Tunisia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

54. Mr. FAGUNDES (Brazil) fully shared the view that the total budgetary provision for section 7B was not sufficient to cover the needs of the African countries. He also believed that the recommendation in the report of the Advisory Committee in favour of establishing two new P-3 posts in the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and the Economic Commission for Africa should be adopted. The campaign to promote world-wide awareness of the critical economic situation in Africa should also be adequately funded.

55. Mr. FATTAH (Egypt) agreed with the representative of Uganda that the resources intended for Africa in section 7B were very limited. As to the problems concerning the post of Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, mentioned in paragraph IV.16 of the Advisory Committee's report, he hoped the situation would be rectified.

56. Mrs. SHEAROUSE (United States of America) said that in the view of her delegation the creation of a new budget section for the situation in Africa offered no administrative or programmatic advantages. On the contrary, it limited the potential of the Secretary-General to redeploy more resources to that programme, since it would be administratively difficult for the Secretary-General to redeploy resources between sections in the coming biennium. She agreed that the resources for section 7B were limited if looked at in isolation, but that budget section had to be considered in the context of the other sections, and the resources for Africa in all of them had also to be taken into account in order to make an informed decision on whether the Secretary-General's proposals accorded the priority to the question that it deserved. Her delegation believed that there was no need to create the two new posts, as their functions could be absorbed by the Departments for which the posts were intended.

57. Mrs. RODRÍGUEZ ABASCAL (Cuba), Mr. DJACTA (Algeria), Mr. AKPLOGAN (Benin), Mr. MALAN (Côte d'Ivoire), Mr. OWADE (Kenya) and Mr. NKOUNKOU (Congo) agreed with the representative of Uganda that the resources for section 7B were insufficient.

58. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh) suggested that the Secretary-General should implement the recommendation made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph IV.16 of its report and should rectify the decision taken on the provision of the post of Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, as it flatly contradicted the decision adopted at the most recent mid-term global review meeting, which had emphasized that special attention should be paid to the needs of the least developed countries and Africa.

59. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said that his delegation would be glad to study carefully all the budget sections and that it would seek justification for all the proposals in them. As far as the creation of two new posts was concerned, his delegation was ready to discuss the matter with those delegations which considered it an unnecessary measure.

60. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), replying to the comments of delegations on section 7B, said that on the question of the total provision for that section, it had to be borne in mind that the resources requested were for activities to coordinate assistance to Africa, not for direct assistance in all areas to that continent. Thus, they did not represent the total resources which the United Nations was allocating to Africa. He emphasized that the budget for the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries had actually been increased by 9.2 per cent over the previous biennium and tnat, although the increase appeared modest, if it was compared with the increase in other sections it would be found to be the second largest increase in the new budget proposals.

61. With regard to the comparative monitoring of costs for the servicing of United Nations conferences, he warned against hasty comparisons, since those conferences played a very important role in promoting social development and the advancement of women, and had brought Governments and non-governmental bodies closer together. He was convinced that the resources allocated to those conferences had been money well spent.

62. He hoped that the situation described in paragraph IV.16 of the Advisory Committee's report would soon be restored to normal, given that the incumbent had returned to his post of Coordinator.

63. As for expenditure on consultants and experts, he said that resources for that purpose would be required under subprogrammes 1 and 2 but not under subprogramme 3.

64. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda), reacting to the Controller's comments, said that it would be useful if the Secretariat could submit, as part of the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, a breakdown of all resources earmarked for the development and recovery of Africa, both inside and outside the United Nations system. However, he disagreed with the Controller's interpretation of the 9.2 per cent increase in resources for the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries; while that increment was the second largest in relative terms, it was insignificant in absolute terms.

65. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee had concluded the first reading of section 7B of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 and decided to refer it to the informal consultations for further consideration and appropriate action.

Section 8. Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis

66. Mr. MIHAI (Romania) welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General to establish the Division for Micro-economic and Social Policy Analysis and expressed his delegation's support for the programmes outlined in section 8, in particular subprogramme 5 as well as the Advisory Committee's recommendation in paragraph IV.20 of its report.

67. Mr. GOKHALE (India) said that, while his delegation generally agreed with the budget proposals in section 8, it had reservations, which it had already expressed in the Committee for Programme and Coordination, about the need for the establishment of a new Division for Micro-economic and Social Policy Analysis. The Division's mandate could be implemented within the framework of the current organizational structure of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. While he had taken note of the Advisory Committee's recommendation to approve the request for four additional posts, he was not convinced that they were necessary.

68. The Committee for Programme and Coordination had been unable to agree on the narrative of the programmes under section 8 and his delegation continued to have reservations with respect to subprogramme 2, Problems and prospects of integrated development, particularly the reference in paragraph 8.42 to the implementation of activities in the area of security, economics and reporting to the Security Council on socio-economic aspects of post-conflict peace-building and the development continuum. That had nothing to do with the mandate of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis; the paragraph should be amended accordingly to reflect that fact.

69. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Russian Federation) said that his delegation generally welcomed the approach used by the Secretariat in preparing the Department's proposed programme budget and agreed with the Advisory Committee's conclusions and recommendations. The mandates approved by the intergovernmental bodies which had been reflected in the proposed programme budget included such important topics as the respective roles of the market and the State in economic and social development, and the continuation of economic and social reforms in central and eastern Europe. He hoped that the modest resources allocated to those issues would be used in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

70. Mr. TOYA (Japan) took note of the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the addition P-5 post which had been requested for activities related to the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development should be provided from the resources allocated through redeployment, while the four posts for the Division for Micro-economic and Social Policy Analysis would be additional. He was not entirely convinced of the need for those four new posts and proposed that one of them should be reallocated to follow-up activities to the Conference in order to ensure maximum efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

71. Mr. GOUMENY (Ukraine) welcomed the establishment of the Division for Micro-economic and Social Policy Analysis, which would permit the implementation of a number of mandates established by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh and forty-eighth sessions, in particular resolution 47/187. He welcomed the savings achieved by the Secretary-General, which resulted in a reduction of $344,100 in the level of resources proposed for the Department as well as in a decline in the total number of posts; he would, however, not hesitate to support the establishment of new posts whenever necessary in order to implement more effectively the mandates established for the Division for Micro-economic and Social Policy Analysis.

72. With respect to subprogramme 2, the narrative in paragraph 8.42 was fully in line with the mandate established by Member States in that area, especially with respect to the impact of economic sanctions on third States. He also endorsed the narrative in paragraphs 8.43 and 8.44 for subprogramme 5. With respect to resource requirements (para. 8.45), the reclassification of one P-4 post to the P-5 level was fully justified.

73. Mr. DIMOV (Bulgaria) said that his delegation supported the establishment of the Division for Micro-economic and Social Policy Analysis. Sufficient resources should be provided for activities relating to the continuation of economic and social reforms in countries with economies in transition and to reporting to the Security Council and the General Assembly on the implementation of multilateral economic sanctions under General Assembly resolution 49/21 A. He also endorsed the establishment of the posts proposed in paragraph IV.20 of the Advisory Committee's report.

74. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh) said that the United Nations generally followed a global macroeconomic approach. While micro-economic analysis might be necessary in certain situations, such as that of countries with economies in transition, such temporary programmes, whose features depended on the peculiar circumstances of each case, did not justify the establishment of a permanent structure such as the Division for Micro-economic and Social Policy Analysis. The professional

qualifications of the staff recruited to fill the new posts might well not be the most appropriate in the future, since the subjects of study might not necessarily remain the same. The Secretariat should consider having recourse to consultants, study centres or intergovernmental organizations, as appropriate, to carry out those specific analyses. Such an approach would be more cost effective.

75. Ms. BUERGO (Cuba) expressed concern at the re-interpretation under paragraph 8.3 of the overall objectives of the Department. It had been indicated in the Medium-Term Plan for the period 1992-1997 that "the goal of the programme is to assist intergovernmental bodies in their responsibility to address international development issues and to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character" as well as to "bring to the attention of intergovernmental bodies new and emerging economic and social issues that would affect world development" (A/47/6/Rev.1, para. 12.1). There was no legislative authority for expanding the scope of the Department's activities beyond Governments and intergovernmental organizations and she would therefore welcome a clarification from the Secretariat on the matter.

76. She drew attention to the reduction in the resources requested for the Department's programmes, in particular the possibility that such reduction would affect follow-up activities to the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. At the same time, she was concerned at the duplication of efforts resulting from the linking of the Department's activities with early warning and analytical capabilities that were being developed in the political and humanitarian sectors (para. 8.8).

77. Her delegation was concerned by the manner in which resources were distributed among the various subprogrammes of programme 12, Global development issues and policies, and drew attention in particular to the fact that subprogramme 3, External debt and development, had received the fewest resources although the General Assembly had given it top priority. She asked the Secretariat to explain the rationale for the allocation of resources.

78. Regarding subprogramme 1, Monitoring and assessment of current global economic issues and policies, she was struck by the fact that analytical support would be provided for the review and appraisal of the agenda for development, upon its adoption (para. 8.30). She requested information regarding the legislative basis requiring the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis to review and appraise the agenda for development following its adoption by the General Assembly.

79. She agreed with the observations made by the Indian delegation and shared the concerns which that delegation had expressed during the deliberations in CPC on the proposed programme budget under consideration. She was surprised by the discrepancies between the description of the subprogramme in the budget documents and that contained in the medium-term plan which had been under consideration earlier and on which work was proceeding. She was particularly concerned by the use of such concepts as that of security economics which had

appeared for the first time in several Secretariat documents and regarding which the General Assembly had not yet taken any decision.

80. During informal negotiations, her delegation would endeavour to amend paragraph 8.42 of the proposed programme budget on the subject of submission of reports to the Assembly and the Security Council on several of the activities listed in that paragraph. It did not agree with the observations the paragraph contained or with the tasks to be allocated to the Department in connection with activities which should rightly fall to the Security Council since they concerned the implementation of multilateral economic sanctions and post-conflict peace-building. It was not appropriate to link activities of that nature with the development needs to which paragraph 8.42 referred specifically.

81. In connection with the various subprogrammes listed in paragraph 8.55 of programme 18, Population, and the percentage distribution of resources among subprogrammes, her delegation was struck by the fact that subprogramme 5, Technical cooperation in population, did not reflect the high priority assigned to it by the General Assembly, in line with the medium-term plan, and that the resources allocated failed to reflect that priority.

82. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said that his delegation shared the views put forward by the representatives of India and Cuba, among others, and expressed its support for the work of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. Regarding the four new posts referred to in paragraph IV.20 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/50/7), it shared that Committee's interest in the description of the functions of the proposed posts. He noted that the Committee had received that information and requested that the Secretariat should give him access to it also.

83. Mr. HALBWACHS (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the subject of activities connected with micro-economic issues had been under consideration for several years. In the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, the Secretary-General had requested four new posts to carry out tasks relating to micro-economic issues, including one D-2 post; on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the General Assembly had asked the Secretary-General to provide a sufficient number of posts, through redeployment, to carry out the activities relating to micro-economic issues. Although the need for such posts had been recognized two years previously, the Secretary-General had been asked to endeavour to meet that need through redeployment, which had been undertaken during the biennium 1994-1995 and during preparation of the proposed budget for the biennium 1996-1997. As was apparent from the proposed budget, it had been possible to create three of the proposed four posts in that manner. The same was not true of the fourth post (D-2), and the Secretary-General had therefore proposed that a new post should be created. He welcomed the Advisory Committee's judgement that the proposal was justified, since the new post would make it possible to establish an independent division for micro-economic issues.

84. The relationship between resources allocated and individual subprogrammes depended primarily on the workload. The fact that more resources were allocated to a given subprogramme did not imply an order of priority. Thus, the 9 per cent proposed for subprogramme 3 of programme 12, External debt, did not

mean that the subprogramme in question was of greater or lesser importance. Indeed, the General Assembly considered it to be a priority subprogramme. The same was true of subprogrammes 4 and 5 on population, which, while receiving fewer resources in the regular budget, would receive additional extrabudgetary resources, particularly subprogramme 5, Technical cooperation.

85. Although redeployment had been achieved in relation to micro-economic issues, the same result had not proved possible in the case of the P-5 post for population issues. Therefore the Secretary-General had been obliged to propose the creation of a new post in that sphere.

86. CPC had already dealt in detail with the question of the activities of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development in the area of security economics and submission of reports to the General Assembly regarding multilateral economic sanctions. The matter involved mandates specifically established in resolution 843 (1993) of the Security Council and in several General Assembly resolutions. In addition, the Programme Planning and Budget Division had drawn up a three-page document for CPC which would be distributed to Committee members during informal consultations and prior to informal negotiations.

87. The Ugandan delegation would be furnished with the requested descriptions of posts connected with micro-economic issues. The Cuban delegation would receive a written response during informal consultations to its question regarding paragraph 8.43 of the proposed programme budget.

Section 9. Department for Development Support and Management Services

88. Mrs. SHEAROUSE (United States of America) said that it was increasingly difficult to justify the budget for the Department for Development Support and Management Services and, consequently, its resources should be consolidated and redeployed to other United Nations bodies responsible for the relevant programming and technical cooperation activities. The diffuse nature of the Department's current activities revealed a grab bag of poorly managed functions without a particular mission, derogating from the prerogatives of other United Nations entities in the area of technical cooperation.

89. The Department's broad programme responsibilities overlapped with the responsibilities and technical cooperation activities of the voluntary funds and programmes of the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). The capacity-building function was at the centre of the mandate of both UNDP and the Department. The responsibility for coordination of technical cooperation activities was also held by other elements within the United Nations system, such as the Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and the UNDP Administrator. Also, changing circumstances suggested that the functions of the Department could be and already were adequately and appropriately performed by other elements of the United Nations system.

90. The Department's functions could be absorbed by the Office of Project Services - the executive arm of UNDP. The Executive Board of UNDP had reviewed

the future of the Office of Project Services for over a year and had recommended against the proposal to merge the Office into the United Nations Secretariat. As a compromise, it had urged that the Office should be recognized as a separate and semi-autonomous entity with an internal accountability system separate from that of UNDP. The Office of Project Services, as a donor-driven manager of voluntary contributions, had an incentive to be more accountable and efficient than the Department for Development Support and Management Services, which was funded under the regular budget.

91. Her delegation concurred with the Advisory Committee's observations on travel costs and procurement services. In line with the overall policy of the United States of America regarding the establishment of new posts, she suggested that the functions of the P-3 post should be approved, but should be entrusted to existing staff.

92. Mr. FATTAH (Egypt) said that his delegation supported the Department's activities and believed that it should be allocated all the necessary resources to carry out its programmes. Regarding the proposed transfer of 17 posts from Geneva to New York and Vienna, he asked what functions had previously been performed under those posts.

93. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Russian Federation) stressed the need to increase the efficiency and productivity of the Department, bearing in mind the considerable resources appropriated to it. His delegation supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation to reduce travel costs to a minimum. It also supported the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a Reconstruction and Development Support Unit in Vienna, and was surprised by the Advisory Committee's position in that respect.

94. The United Nations Secretariat was carrying out a reform of the procurement process, and in that context it was unacceptable for the Department for Development Support and Management Services to remain outside that process. It was important to centralize the procurement services of the United Nations so as to effect savings and maintain a unified administrative structure which would take a professional and coordinated approach to the procurement of goods and services. The Advisory Committee's proposal should be supported and the Secretariat should study it carefully.

95. Mr. TOYA (Japan) said that he supported the proposal to establish a P-3 post for the Reconstruction and Development Support Unit in Vienna, since its activities related not only to countries with economies in transition but also to a new dimension, namely, the region of the former Yugoslavia.

96. Ms. BUERGO (Cuba) said that her delegation attached particular importance to the Department and its activities related to technical coordination and cooperation and assistance to developing countries. In that respect, it was concerned about the level of resources proposed for the Department's programmes, which was being reduced by some 5.4 per cent. She wondered whether the Department would be able to carry out all the activities envisaged for the biennium in view of that reduction.

97. She also expressed concern about the mandates for the establishment of the Reconstruction and Development Support Unit, which would perform the functions listed in paragraph 9.8 of the proposed programme budget. She reiterated that her delegation had no difficulty with the establishment of that Unit, but was concerned that the activities listed in paragraph 9.8 of the proposed programme budget went far beyond the functions of support to reconstruction and development.

98. In some parts of the narrative of section 9, the role of the Governments of Member States was ignored in the context of the request for assistance for the Department's various activities. In particular there were omissions in respect of the sovereignty of States over their natural resources, a question which had been adequately reflected in the drafting of the medium-term plan but did not appear in that section of the budget.

99. Lastly, she reiterated her position regarding the use of concepts such as "sustainable human development" in the narrative of that section of the budget, although they had not been approved by the General Assembly, and requested an amendment in that respect.

100. Mr. GOUMENNY (Ukraine) said that he fully supported the proposals made by the Secretary-General in paragraph 9.8 of the proposed programme budget. His delegation attached particular importance to the participation of the Department for Development Support and Management Services in the processes that were currently taking place in the former Yugoslavia. It also supported the recommendation made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph IV.26 of its report that the establishment in Vienna of a Reconstruction and Development Support Unit should be approved

101. Mr. CHU Guangyou (China) said that the human and financial resources of the Department for Development Support and Management Services were tending to diminish, and that was giving rise to concern in many developing countries, since the Department provided them with direct assistance in the area of technical cooperation and the development of human resources. Although his delegation agreed with other delegations that the Department's functions overlapped those of other United Nations departments, it believed that the appropriate solution would be to try to reduce overlap as far as possible and not, as those delegations had proposed, to merge the functions of the departments concerned.

102. With regard to reform of the United Nations, he stressed that that was a very serious undertaking which should not be carried out lightly. It was important to learn from the attempts at reform in the past and to be well aware that a State could not impose its reform measures on other States, but must consult all the Member States of the Organization, the Main Committees and the departments concerned about such measures.

103. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the reduction of resources for the Department for Development Support and Management Services resulted from two proposals: first, the proposal to transfer technical cooperation services for the countries with economies in transition of Eastern Europe and the former Yugoslavia from Geneva to Vienna, primarily, and secondarily to New York, and

second, to abolish three General Service posts providing secretarial services. Although he took note of the concern expressed in that respect by various delegations, he said that the implementation of those two proposals would enable the Department to provide better services, since the countries receiving technical assistance were closer to Vienna than Geneva, so that there would be economies in staff, travel, and other costs. Those measures were a response to the mandate entrusted to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly in resolutions 48/181 and 49/106 concerning the integration of the economies in transition into the world economy.

104. He took note of the Advisory Committee's recommendation and said that the Secretariat intended to take it up when it considered new economy measures to be adopted to improve the efficiency of the system.

105. Mr. HALBWACHS (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the 17 posts to be transferred from Geneva to New York and Vienna were concerned with fellowships and the technical assistance recruitment function.

106. The CHAIRMAN said that he took it that the Committee had completed the first reading of section 9 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 and decided to refer it to informal consultations for further consideration and appropriate action.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
16th meeting
held on
Thursday, 1 November 1995
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VILCHEZ ASHER (Nicaragua)

later: Mr. ABELIAN (Armenia)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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Section 11. United Nations Environment Programme

Section 12. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

Section 13. Crime control

Section 14. International drug control

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 116: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997 (continued) (A/50/6 Rev.1 (Vol. I and II), A/50/7 and A/50/16)

First reading (continued)

Section 10A. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Section 10B. International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT

Section 11. United Nations Environment Programme

Section 12. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

Section 13. Crime control

Section 14. International drug control

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), presenting the Advisory Committee's recommendations on sections 10A, 10B, 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, said that, with regard to section 10A (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), the Advisory Committee noted that the General Assembly had reaffirmed the role of UNCTAD as the appropriate focal point within the United Nations for the integrated treatment of development and interrelated issues in the areas of trade, finance, technology, investment and sustainable development (A/50/7, para. IV.29).

2. The Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the proposal that a temporary D-2 post dealing with transnational corporations activities should be converted to established status (para. IV.31). Several high-level posts in UNCTAD including that of Secretary-General, had been vacant when the Advisory Committee had considered the estimates; that situation must be rectified in view of its possible impact on the programme of work of UNCTAD. The Advisory Committee recommended that provision should be made from within existing resources for a P-4 post relating to the sustainable development of small island developing States; that post had been inadvertently left out of the budget presentation on UNCTAD. The Advisory Committee, noting the proliferation of publications issued by UNCTAD, also recommended that the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD should become involved in an in-depth review of the matter on an urgent basis (para. IV.36).

3. In connection with section 10B (International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT), he noted that UNCTAD and GATT were jointly responsible, in an equal partnership, for the International Trade Centre. There would be a need to examine the extent to which that arrangement would be affected by the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Any change in the current arrangement would be reported on separately. The Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the proposal for an additional P-4 post for activities relating to the follow-up to the Uruguay Round (para. IV.39).

4. With regard to section 11 (United Nations Environment Programme) and section 12 (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)), the Advisory Committee welcomed the efforts of the Executive Director of UNEP to limit documentation. In that connection, he pointed out that, in its decision 18/44 B, the Governing Council of UNEP, had requested the donors to trust funds to abide strictly by the terms of the trust funds and recommended that every effort should be made to reduce expenditure on the administration of trust funds; in its decision 18/45, it had requested the Executive Director to keep under review the financial viability of establishing a team of interpreters at Nairobi; and, in its decision 18/49, it had indicated that consultancies should be awarded only after it had been ascertained that no in-house expertise was available. Lastly, in its decision 18/47, it had decided that the agreement on the Mercure satellite telecommunications system should be submitted to the General Assembly for endorsement in accordance with United Nations procedures. In that regard, be noted that in the past, some recommendations submitted to the General Assembly had not been dealt with in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure, even though their implementation might have had considerable financial implications. The Secretariat should take appropriate action. The Advisory Committee would comment on the Mercure satellite system after reviewing the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations telecommunications project.

5. The Advisory Committee noted that the administrative support previously provided for separately under Habitat and UNEP had been consolidated under section 26H (Administration, Nairobi). In its decision 18/43 on the establishment of a United Nations Office in Nairobi, however, the Governing Council of UNEP had indicated that the separate identities and equal status of the two organizations should be maintained.

6. In connection with section 13 (Crime control), he said that it had become apparent to the Advisory Committee that there was a need to review the nomenclature used for the organizational structure under that section, since the heads of some divisions were at the D-1 level while others were at the D-2 level. In the absence of a clear definition of the role of the Director-General of the United Nations office at Vienna vis-à-vis the various specialized units at Vienna, it was difficult for the Advisory Committee to determine whether the upgrading of the post of Chief of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch from the D-1 to the D-2 level was justified; the matter should be deferred pending additional clarification. Moreover, given the inadequate definition of the functions to be performed by the two additional P-3 posts requested, the Advisory Committee recommended the establishment of only one such post (para. IV.51).

7. With regard to section 14 (International drug control), he noted that most of the posts were funded from extrabudgetary resources. More effort should have been made to indicate the sources of funding for the various activities mentioned in the narrative. The Advisory Committee recommended the establishment of only one P-3 post (para. IV.56). It also believed that the total amount proposed for travel was high and should be kept under strict control (para. IV.58).

8. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider sections 10 through 14 section by section.

Section 10A. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

9. Mrs. ARAGON (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, reaffirmed the role of UNCTAD as an important focal point and the sole entity with the capacity to act as a think-tank on global development issues with an emphasis on the concerns of developing countries. UNCTAD had attained still greater relevance after the conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the creation of WTO and had an important role to play in providing developing countries with an analysis of the impact of the Uruguay Round agreements.

10. There was no overlapping of functions between UNCTAD and WTO: WTO was primarily devoted to the implementation of contractual obligations in international trade, whereas UNCTAD had a broader role in providing a development perspective in international trade of deliberations. The two roles complemented each other. The Group of 77 and China remained strongly committed to the strengthening of UNCTAD and had noted with concern that the proposed level of resources might not be adequate to enable the Conference to meet its obligations. In that regard, she was concerned at the omission of the P-4 post in connection with small island developing States.

11. Mr. RAMLAL (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community, said that he fully agreed with the representative of the Philippines that there appeared to be inadequate provision in the proposed programme budget for UNCTAD. There was a need to restore the balance between peace-keeping and other activities. His delegation would welcome an explanation of how UNCTAD could discharge its responsibilities with reduced resources, particularly given the aims of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

12. Mrs. NHLABATSI (Swaziland) said that her delegation supported the statement by the representative of the Philippines. UNCTAD was critical to the economic survival of developing countries, particularly in Africa. She requested clarification of the proposed conversion of a temporary D-2 post to established status, and asked why the post of Secretary-General of UNCTAD had been vacant for so long, on what terms the officer-in-charge had been employed, and why some posts had been filled by staff at a lower level receiving special post allowances. That situation must have an impact on the efficiency of UNCTAD, and must be rectified. Her delegation was concerned at the suggestion that there was duplication in publications. She appealed for adequate resources to be allocated in connection with the ninth session of the Conference, scheduled to take place in South Africa in April 1996.

13. Ms. BUERGO (Cuba) said that section 10A was of great importance in the coordination of activities for developing countries, and that her delegation fully supported the statements made by the representatives of the Philippines and Trinidad and Tobago. She welcomed the appointment, after a lengthy delay, of a Secretary-General of UNCTAD, but expressed her concern at the impact of the budget proposals now before the Committee; there were many vacant posts at UNCTAD, and that situation might well have an impact on its work and mandate. The omission of the P-4 post for follow-up to the Barbados Programme of Action was disquieting. Moreover, further clarification should be provided regarding the conversion of a temporary D-2 post to established status. Her delegation

was committed to the activities of UNCTAD; its role remained valid in that it was complementary to that of the World Trade Organization.

14. Mrs. SHEAROUSE (United States of America) said that too many resources were being proposed for UNCTAD, which had a top-heavy structure and needed to improve its efficiency. Her delegation did not support the proposed conversion of the temporary D-2 post to established status. There was a clear need to eliminate duplication of activities within UNCTAD and between UNCTAD and other organizations in the United Nations system, with a view to achieving efficiency gains. Noting, for example, that some $18.5 million was allocated for programme support, she wondered whether any effort had been made at coordination in respect of common services at Geneva. There was also duplication in certain areas with the work of the regional economic commissions. With regard to publications, she asked whether UNCTAD publication activities had been evaluated with a view, again, to preventing duplication.

15. Mr. GOKHALE (India) said that his delegation supported the statement by the representative of the Philippines. The recent meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in Cartagena had reaffirmed the importance of UNCTAD and of allowing it to discharge its mandate. The budget for UNCTAD should reflect the requirements that would emerge at the ninth session of the Conference. Furthermore, there had never been a monopoly within the United Nations in terms of dealing with trade issues. For example, the International Monetary Fund had long played a role in that domain, and UNCTAD would continue to have a valid role following the establishment of the World Trade Organization.

16. Mr. JU Kuilin (China) said that his delegation fully agreed with the statement made by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It attached great importance to the resource allocation for economic development and associated issues under section 10A and was concerned to note that it had been reduced without a legislative mandate or any analysis of the possible adverse impact on programmes. China could not share the view of some delegations that there was duplication or overlapping with other programmes. Those delegations should adduce facts in support of their arguments rather than making unilateral claims. It would be a mistake to scale down or phase out important development and trade programmes on such a pretext. His delegation was particularly concerned that resource reductions might adversely affect follow-up action to the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. In that connection, it supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee for the restoration of the P-4 post for UNCTAD.

17. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) said that his delegation wished to be associated with the statement made by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and also with the statements made by the representatives of Swaziland, Cuba, India and China.

18. Every aspect of the budget should be closely scrutinized. With regard to the proposed reduction of over $2.9 million in the appropriation for UNCTAD, his delegation felt that those resources could have been redeployed, for example to the programme for least developed, land-locked and island developing countries, which was consistently underfunded. It feared that the reduction might

adversely affect the ability of UNCTAD to follow up the recommendations of the high-level meeting on the mid-term review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s.

19. The Committee was being informed on an ex post facto basis of redeployments between programmes that had taken place during the 1994-1995 biennium. He wondered why it had not been given a chance to examine the desirability of such action in advance.

20. His delegation, like that of Swaziland would like to know why a number of posts at UNCTAD, in particular the post of Secretary-General, had remained vacant for such a long period. It also wished to know how the programme of work had been affected by the filling of certain posts by staff at a lower level.

21. Lastly his delegation supported the restoration to the staffing table of the P-4 post inadvertently omitted from the budget presentation on UNCTAD.

22. Mr. FATTAH (Egypt) said that his delegation wished to be associated with the statement made by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. As the representative of India had said, the developing countries had expressed strong support for UNCTAD in the declaration adopted at the recent meeting of the movement of Non-Aligned Countries in Cartagena. His delegation welcomed the appointment of a new Secretary-General of UNCTAD, under whose leadership it trusted that UNCTAD would become a valuable instrument for the economic advancement of the developing countries.

23. Some delegations took the view that UNCTAD had become superfluous when the World Trade Organization (WTO) had been established. On the contrary, UNCTAD was the key negotiating forum in the field of trade and development and would continue to play that role however strident its critics. It was qualified to serve as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) of the developing countries.

24. Mr. KOUZNETSOV (Russian Federation) noted that the programme budget proposals for UNCTAD were strongly influenced by the new mandates it had been given in 1994 by the Trade and Development Board, particularly in connection with the conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the establishment of WTO. In his delegation's view, the resources proposed for the biennium 1996-1997 were both realistic and sufficient to allow UNCTAD to fulfil its mandates. It supported rationalization through the abolition of General Service posts that had been made redundant by automation, as well as the modest increase in funds for the programme of work.

25. It also supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations that a temporary D-2 post dealing with transnational corporation activities should be converted to established status (A/50/7, para. IV.31) and that provision should be made for a P-4 post in the area of sustainable development of small island developing States (para. IV.33).

26. His delegation urged the Secretariat to continue its efforts to reduce temporary auxiliary personnel and to rationalize the structure of expenditure and UNCTAD activities in general in order to make additional savings.

27. It agreed with the Advisory Committee's recommendation for an in-depth review of the UNCTAD publications programme to assess its usefulness and to ensure that there was no duplication of material published by other entities within the United Nations system.

28. Although his delegation recognized that a certain vacancy level was unavoidable, it agreed with ACABQ that the situation at UNCTAD where several high-level posts had remained vacant for long periods or had been filled by staff at a lower level needed to be examined and rectified (para. IV.32). In that connection, the Secretariat should take into account the views of Member States concerning the importance of particular programmes of activities.

29. Mr. TOYA (Japan) said that UNCTAD still had an important role to play in such areas as the impact of the conclusion of the Uruguay Round on the least developed countries, trade efficiency, investment promotion, South-South cooperation and research, and technical assistance. That role could be enhanced if UNCTAD were to evolve into a more constructive policy forum, implementing its activities in a more efficient and effective manner and continuing to work for reform, especially with a view to avoiding duplication with other bodies, including WTO.

30. His delegation commended the effort to reduce the budget level before recosting. A further effort at rationalization was, however, required, particularly through prioritization of programmes and a review of the publications programme.

31. Mr. KOSY (Ukraine) said that his delegation attached great importance to the more active involvement in world trade of developing countries and economies in transition. It therefore supported the programme budget proposals for UNCTAD for the biennium 1996-1997. It also welcomed the measures designed to rationalize the use of financial resources during that period.

32. All Member States should be accorded equal opportunities within the framework of UNCTAD. In particular, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that were in the process of transition to a market economy depended on foreign trade as one of their main sources of foreign exchange.

33. His delegation also attached great importance to activities under subprogramme 8: privatization, entrepreneurship and competitiveness. An increase in appropriations for that subprogramme would ease the task of those Member States which were endeavouring to reform their economies.

34. Mr. MARCONDES DE CARVALHO (Brazil) said that his delegation wished to be associated with the statement made by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. UNCTAD was facing a new set of challenges following the conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the establishment of WTO. His delegation considered that the mandates of UNCTAD and WTO did not overlap but were complementary. There was no evidence that the broader role of UNCTAD on behalf of trade and development was duplicated anywhere else in the United Nations system.

35. The ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, scheduled for 1996, would provide an excellent opportunity for a review of mandates to ensure that they were in keeping with the new challenges. UNCTAD should not have its resources curtailed; they should, rather, be enhanced to meet those challenges.

36. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that, under the proposed programme budget for UNCTAD, there had been a significant redeployment of human and other resources from administrative to substantive activities. Moreover, within the substantive programmes, there had been a shift from low-priority to high-priority areas. All modifications were strictly in line with the decisions of the Trade Development Board. Additional support had been accorded to international competition, poverty alleviation, regional integration, privatization, trade efficiency and science and technology, at the expense of some other activities.

37. A highly qualified candidate with strong leadership qualities had been appointed Secretary-General of UNCTAD in September 1995. Prior to his appointment, the officer-in-charge had discharged his duties extremely well.

38. With regard to resource reductions, table 10A.1 in the proposed programme budget (A/50/6/Rev.1) showed an overall reduction of approximately $2.9 million. The reduction of about $500,000 for policy-making organs reflected the fact that many preparatory regional working groups for the ninth session of the Conference had already met during the current biennium. The reduction of $1.8 million for executive direction and management and of $1.2 million for programme support reflected the abolition of seven General Service posts as a result of technological improvements. There had been no impact on the substantive programme.

39. The omission of the P-4 post for activities relating to the sustainable development of small island developing States had been an oversight and would be rectified, as recommended by ACABQ.

40. With regard to the D-2 post dealing with transnational corporations activities, two years previously the Secretary-General had proposed that a D-2 post for trade relations between socialist countries and developing countries should be abolished when the corresponding programme was abolished. The Fifth Committee had, however decided to redeploy that post temporarily to the transnational corporations area. The current proposal was that it should be converted into an established post.

41. With regard to the streamlining of the UNCTAD publications programme with a view to avoiding potential duplication, an in-depth review of the matter had been initiated and should be concluded by mid-1996.

42. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) asked whether the vacant posts mentioned in paragraph IV.32 of the ACABQ report had been filled and, if so what their geographical distribution was. He also wondered how the Secretariat intended to follow up the mid-term review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s.

43. Mr. BLACKMAN (Barbados) welcomed the assurance given by the Controller that the recommendation made by ACABQ in paragraph IV.33 of its report would be carried out. He asked for confirmation that resources would be available to implement the provisions of General Assembly resolution 49/122.

44. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that it took time to fill vacant posts with the best qualified candidates. The situation described in paragraph IV.32 of the ACABQ report had improved, but a limited number of vacancies were still under recruitment. He understood that the P-4 post referred to in paragraph IV.33 of the same report would be filled through redeployment.

Section 10B. International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT

45. The CHAIRMAN said that, in the absence of comments on section 10B, he would take it that the Committee had completed the first reading of that section of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 and decided to refer it to informal consultations for further consideration and appropriate action.

Section 11. United Nations Environment Programme

46. Mr. ONGERI (Kenya), supported by Mr. FONTOURRA (Brazil), Mr. FATTAH (Egypt), Mr. DJACTA (Algeria), and Ms. BUERGO (Cuba), said that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was one of the leading United Nations agencies in matters relating to the environment. Given the many environmental challenges with which the world was currently faced, UNEP had an important role to play in environmental management and in institution- and capacity-building, particularly in the industrial, transportation and energy sectors. Any savings realized through more efficient management should therefore be redirected towards the strengthening of programmes. He did not understand why the P-5 post had been eliminated at a time when the stated objective was to strengthen the Programme's capacity.

47. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda), supporting the position taken by the representative of Kenya, expressed surprise that the conference services resources of UNEP should be reduced precisely at a time when the Programme's role was being expanded to enable it to follow up the implementation of Agenda 21 and other international agreements in the field of the environment. The decision to reduce the allocation of resources to UNEP must be reviewed in the light of the broadening of its mandate.

48. With regard to the proposed abolition of the P-5 post, he wondered why that post had remained vacant for four years and what impact that vacancy had had on the Programme's activities. In his view, it would be better to redeploy the post to another priority area in the programme of work of UNEP.

49. His delegation agreed on the need to reduce the volume of documentation, but believed that the length of documents should be decided on a case-by-case basis and should reflect the value of the document in question to the decision-making process.

50. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the proposals currently before the Committee had been made after close consultations with the Executive Director of

UNEP and that the full programmatic implications of the proposed reductions had already been taken into account. Savings had been realized by reducing the cost of temporary assistance to the Governing Council and by the use of remote translation facilities.

51. With regard to the P-5 post, UNEP was satisfied that it had an adequate number of experts to carry out its programme of work in the field of energy. He recalled that when UNEP had been created, the General Assembly had assumed responsibility only for the funding of a small secretariat to serve as a focal point for environmental action and coordination within the United Nations system. Programme activities were the responsibility of the Environment Fund. Even though the international community had in recent years adopted several conventions relating to the environment, those commitments were outside the scope of the regular budget of the Organization.

52. Mr. ONGERI (Kenya), referring to the question of savings through technological innovation, said that Kenya had invested in the creation of electronic mail capacity in order to enhance the efficiency of the work of UNEP. The savings thus realized should be allocated to other priority areas, given the importance of the Programme's work, particularly to developing countries. In that connection, the P-5 post which it was proposed to abolish should be reassigned to another priority area, such as poverty alleviation, drought and desertification, or fresh water supply. His delegation was concerned that such decisions represented a quiet attempt to whittle down the Programme at a time when its role was becoming increasingly important.

Section 12. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

53. Mr. DJACTA (Algeria) said that it was important that the necessary resources should be made available for the adequate preparation of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

54. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) said that the reduction in resource allocations to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) should not jeopardize the preparations for Habitat II. Adequate resources must also be made available for the follow-up to the Conference's decisions. He would welcome clarification of the point raised in the Advisory Committee's report concerning the figures in the staffing table for the biennium 1996-1997 (A/50/7, para. IV.45).

55. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the proposed budget allocations accurately reflected the Centre's programme of work. The expenditure relating to the regional preparatory meetings already held in connection with Habitat II had been reflected in the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. Resources could be allocated only on the basis of legislative mandates approved by the General Assembly. No provision could therefore be made for follow-up action before the Conference had even taken place.

Section 13. Crime control

56. Ms. INCERA (Costa Rica) said that the proposals to upgrade the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch to a division, to upgrade the post of

Chief of the Branch to the D-2 level, and to establish two additional P-3 posts were fully justified in the light of the work being done by the Branch, which was crucial to efforts to combat the globalization of criminal activity. A balance must therefore be ensured between the level of resource allocations and the expanded mandate of the Branch.

57. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that, even though the United States recognized the importance of the activities of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch, the Branch did not currently merit upgrading to a division. By far the greater part of its budgetary allocation was spent on overheads and staff, leaving very little for law enforcement programmes. The Branch's crime-based activities were mostly limited to providing documentation for United Nations meetings.

58. Her Government's support for the proposal to upgrade the Branch would depend on the establishment and implementation of a number of benchmarks: first, the Branch should fully implement the strategic management plan which established priority themes, prior to its convening of the quinquennial United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders; second, it should fully observe the requirement that sponsoring States or the Secretariat should provide project data for all proposed resolutions; third, it should prepare a timely, written programme budget impact statement before any resolution was considered by the Fifth Committee; finally, the Branch should demonstrate that it had carried out significant substantive activities in fulfilment of its current mandate.

59. The United States would convey to the United Nations its assessment of the progress achieved towards establishing and meeting the above benchmarks before it could consider whether it would support the upgrading of the Branch. It also supported the Advisory Committee's request for additional information to enable it to consider the Secretary-General's proposals.

60. Mr. MUÑOZ (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the work of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch was important to efforts to combat crime and the European Union welcomed the proposals for the strengthening of the Branch. It was, however, important for the Secretariat to respond as early as possible to the various questions raised by the Advisory Committee on section 13 of the proposed programme budget.

61. Mr. HANSON (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said it was important to respond effectively to the challenges posed by crime and he therefore supported the proposal that the Branch should be upgraded to a division, subject to the concerns raised by the Advisory Committee being met, particularly the need to define the role of the United Nations Office at Vienna. It was unfortunate that the Advisory Committee had had to repeat its request for the information it needed.

62. Ms. BUERGO (Cuba) said that adequate resources must be provided for the elaboration and implementation of crime control activities during the biennium 1996-1997 and for the implementation of the recommendations of the Ninth Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. She wished to draw attention to the growing phenomenon of the international trafficking in

minors in which organized criminal groups were often involved. Finally, it was inappropriate to establish a linkage between the provision of technical assistance and advisory services to States and the promotion of the rule of law, sound public administration and good governance on the part of receiving States.

63. Mr. GODA (Japan) said that, in view of the importance of section 13, his delegation supported the strengthening of the activities of the United Nations in the field by the upgrading of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch to a division and the establishment of two additional P-3 posts. Certain crime control follow-up activities were still before another Main Committee of the General Assembly and could have programme budget implications which would require additional resources. In that event, his delegation reserved the right to revert to the issue.

64. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) supported strengthening the crime control activities of the United Nations and endorsed the provision of increased resources at both the global and the regional level. In that connection, the United Nations should take a leading role in financing crime control activities and entities in Africa.

65. His delegation would appreciate further information regarding the role of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, as mentioned in paragraph IV.49 of the Advisory Committee's report A/50/7, with a view to avoiding duplication of workloads and ensuring greater cost-effectiveness. With regard to paragraph IV.51 of that report, he would welcome additional details of the proposed functions of the two new P-3 posts so that an informed decision could be taken on whether or not they should be created.

66. Mrs. BRENNEN-HAYLOCK (Bahamas) said that her Government had consistently supported the Secretary-General's proposals in the field of crime control, and noted that both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council had repeatedly called for the strengthening of measures in that field and for a more precise definition of the role of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna.

67. Regarding the question of cooperation between the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) raised in paragraph IV.52 of the Advisory Committee's report, she noted that such cooperation had been the subject of at least two reports to the Third Committee.

68. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that United Nations activities in the field of crime control had always been very clear-cut, particularly in the areas of norm-setting and the provision of technical assistance by the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch. Recent years had witnessed increasing requests for technical assistance support and the Branch had therefore shifted its resources in that direction. Despite the increase in demand for its services, the Branch still had a relatively small staff of 20 people. Referring to paragraph 13.8 of the proposed programme budget (A/50/6), he pointed out that 30 per cent of the regular budget resources and almost all the extrabudgetary resources had been allocated to subprogramme 1, which included such advisory services.

69. With regard to the status and functions of the head of the programme, he drew the Committee's attention to a staffing table of the United Nations Office at Vienna showing that the Director-General was not a full time Director-General. His supervisory role covered matters relating to outer space, crime prevention, the drug control programme and certain other areas. As the highest official of the United Nations in Vienna, his role was to provide leadership, maintain high-level contacts with Member States, and mobilize the resources of the criminal justice programme. In line with the proposal to upgrade the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch to a division, it was also proposed that the D-1 post of the Chief of the Branch should be reclassified to the D-2 level. The Chief of the Branch was responsible for the day-to-day running of the unit, which had seen the volume of its work triple in recent years. In the same connection, he referred to paragraph 13.19 of the proposed programme budget, which outlined the respective functions of the two additional P-3 posts requested.

Section 14. International drug control

70. Miss MONTAÑO (Bolivia), supported by Ms. BUERGO (Cuba), said that section 14 had been made a priority in the Medium-term plan and her delegation had therefore been concerned to note that no resources had apparently been appropriated for technical cooperation under subprogramme 4. She requested further information on the sources of funding in that area.

71. Mr. MUÑOZ (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, endorsed United Nations efforts to strengthen the capacity of the drug control programme. He would, however, like to have more details about the functions of the two new P-3 posts that had been requested. It would also be helpful to learn what cooperation had been undertaken between the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/158.

72. Mr. GODA (Japan) said that his Government supported in principle the measures proposed by the Secretary-General in the field of international drug control, but noted that the same question was being debated in another Main Committee. His delegation therefore reserved the right to revert to the issue in the event of any subsequent programme budget implications arising.

73. Mr. MONGELLA (United Republic of Tanzania) reiterated the concerns expressed by the representatives of Bolivia and Cuba with regard to the apparent lack of appropriations for subprogramme 4. He was also distressed to note that much of the funding for drug control activities came from extrabudgetary resources, which were diminishing.

74. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) endorsed the Advisory Committee's request for justification for the proposed redeployment of posts within the drug control programme (A/50/7, para. IV.57) and called on those States which were in a position to provide extrabudgetary funds to target their appropriations to the priority areas specified by the General Assembly.

75. Mr. HALBWACHS (Director of the Budget Division) explained that the normative functions of UNDCP were funded from the regular budget. Pursuant to

the establishment of the Fund of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme in 1991, technical cooperation activities had been funded from extrabudgetary resources, as illustrated in table 14.2 of the proposed programme budget. That explained why no regular budget resources had been allocated to that area.

76. He clarified that only one of the two additional P-3 posts requested was to be assigned to subprogramme 8; the other post was, in fact, to be assigned to subprogramme 7. A more detailed account of the proposed functions of those posts would be supplied in due course. In response to the request by the representative of Spain for more information about cooperation between the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, he referred to the comment made earlier by the representative of the Bahamas and undertook to provide the references to the relevant reports.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
17th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 1 November 1995
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AMARI (Tunisia)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 116: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997 (continued) (A/50/6 (Vol. I and II), A/50/7 and A/50/16)

First reading (continued)

Section 15. Economic Commission for Africa

Section 16. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Section 17. Economic Commission for Europe

Section 18. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Section 19. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, Mr. Mselle, to introduce sections 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

2. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on sections 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 of the proposed programme budget, on the regional commissions, said that that Committee welcomed the measures taken to streamline the commissions' organizational structures, which, in its opinion, should be compatible with administrative responsibility for programme implementation. A greater effort must be made to see that the mode of programme implementation chosen ensured the best use of available resources and averted duplication of activity. In addition, the executive offices of the commissions must take care not to compromise their monitoring and supervisory role by participating too extensively in the carrying out of substantive activities.

3. Redeployment of staff resources should be based on programme needs, not personnel policies. Moreover, the intergovernmental bodies concerned should review in depth the extensive publications programmes of all the commissions. The level of resources requested for programme support in several of the commissions, which appeared excessive, also required review. Expenditure on travel, especially travel connected with the collection of data, should be monitored more closely.

4. The level of extrabudgetary resources received had declined dramatically. It should be determined whether the decline reflected a general trend or whether the cost-effectiveness of operations in some regions needed to be improved in order to attract extrabudgetary resources. The infrastructure and number of staff involved in extrabudgetary activities should be in line with the extrabudgetary resources available.

5. Several regional commissions had built conference facilities at their headquarters, and the headquarters rule should apply to them. In the next

proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General should provide statistics on the meeting programmes of all the commissions.

6. The Advisory Committee was recommending acceptance of the request to establish one P-4 post for the follow-up to the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), respectively.

7. In considering the proposed programme budget, the Advisory Committee had taken into consideration the report submitted by the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services with respect to ECA, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).

8. With regard to section 15 A, Economic Commission for Africa, the Advisory Committee was recommending acceptance of the request for the establishment of two additional P-3 posts and three additional Local level posts to provide support for the newly constructed conference facilities in Addis Ababa. It would be necessary to clarify to what extent the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services had been implemented with respect to centralizing the function of financial authorization for all ECA funds. In addition, the Advisory Committee was still awaiting the clarification it had requested concerning the role of the Executive Secretary of ECA, the ECA secretariat and the committees of intergovernmental experts of the multinational programming and operational centres (MULPOCs) in programme formulation and implementation. It should be noted that the resources for the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning and the African Regional Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders had been maintained at the same level as for the preceding biennium, pending submission by the Secretary-General of a report on funding for regional institutes.

9. With regard to section 16, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Advisory Committee commented that ESCAP had chosen the thematic approach to its programme of work and would review its secretariat structure in 1997. The Advisory Committee hoped that its comments in paragraph V.3 of the ACABQ report would be taken into account in that connection.

10. Referring to section 17, Economic Commission for Europe, he said that the total resources available to ECE exceeded the $47.7 million indicated in paragraph V.30 of the Advisory Committee's report, given that resources for administration, conference services and general services for ECE were included in other sections of the budget. The Advisory Committee was recommending approval of the establishment of two additional posts, one at the P-5 level and the other at the P-3 level. It had been learned after the preparation of the proposed programme budget that ECE would receive additional extrabudgetary resources from UNDP in an amount of approximately $3 million.

11. In connection with section 18, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Advisory Committee had been informed that ECLAC had adopted a sectoral approach in its programme of work. The Advisory Committee hoped that

close coordination between divisions would be maintained to avoid duplication of effort. ECLAC being the only regional commission with somewhat limited conference facilities, the estimated requirements for general temporary assistance and the rental of conference facilities were justified. Since considerable amounts had been proposed for data-processing services and equipment, the Advisory Committee trusted that more would be accomplished with fewer resources.

12. With regard to section 19, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Advisory Committee had taken note of the possible transfer of the ESCWA secretariat from Amman to Beirut. No provision had been made for that purpose in the proposed programme budget since consultations had still been under way when the Advisory Committee was preparing its report. It recommended that the Secretary-General should submit a report on the administrative and financial implications of such a transfer. It was also recommending acceptance of the request for reclassification of a Local level post to the Professional category.

13. The Advisory Committee hoped that in future the narrative relating to the activities under the sections in question would be more specific and less theoretical.

14. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Russian Federation) supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the need to streamline the organizational structure of the regional commissions and to clearly define their objectives, reduce their administrative costs and limit the overlapping and duplication of tasks. With regard to the problem of duplication, the regional and country programmes of various United Nations specialized agencies needed to be reviewed. Restructuring would strengthen the regional commissions and enhance the effectiveness of their work.

15. The Russian Federation agreed with the Advisory Committee that the publications programmes of the regional commissions should be reviewed in order to ensure maximum effectiveness in responding to the interests of consumers with regard to content, quality and cost.

16. The Russian Federation also agreed with the Advisory Committee that the level of resources requested for programme support activities was excessive. The expenditure structures of the regional commissions needed to be streamlined and the savings realized in administrative costs redeployed to programme activities. The Russian Federation, moreover, agreed with the Advisory Committee that efforts should be made to take full advantage of certain technological innovations, such as remote conference servicing, in order to achieve savings in travel expenditure.

17. Lastly, the Russian Federation believed that more in-depth consideration should be given to the question of conference services. There should be strict compliance with the General Assembly's provisions with regard to the organization of meetings at regional headquarters, in view of the considerable sums that had been expended not long before on the construction of facilities and the provision of conference services in various regional commissions. However, the possibility of organizing conferences away from regional

headquarters would not be ruled out, provided that the cost was borne by the host country.

Section 15. Economic Commission for Africa

18. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) noted the reduction in the extrabudgetary resources proposed for ECA and said that the Secretary-General should use his influence, not only as the highest administrative functionary of the Organization but also as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), to mobilize additional extrabudgetary resources in support of the Commission. He should also approach various multilateral agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and urge them to consider increasing their support for the Commission.

19. He shared the Advisory Committee's view that the allocation of resources among the subprogrammes of ECA should reflect the priority assigned to each subprogramme. Certain subprogrammes that were designated as priority in the proposed programme budget had received less resources than other less urgent ones. That situation should be rectified.

20. Uganda had repeatedly observed that disproportionate emphasis was being placed on economic development in ECA programmes in comparison with the social sector, which was also an integral part of sustainable development. He urged the Secretary-General to try to redress that imbalance in the activities to be implemented during the biennium.

21. Uganda welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal, which had been approved by the Advisory Committee, to continue support for the activities of the African Regional Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI). At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Institute was provided with adequate funds and to submit proposals for additional resources in the context of the proposed programme budget. He therefore hoped that the Secretary-General would prepare fresh proposals in response to the General Assembly's request.

22. He also hoped that the Secretary-General would use his influence to overcome the administrative bottlenecks affecting ECA, which had, to some extent, exacerbated the Institute's administrative problems.

23. Uganda also welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal, which had been approved by the Advisory Committee, concerning financial support for the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), and hoped that the Fifth Committee would also approve it.

24. He welcomed the streamlining of the organizational chart of the ECA secretariat which the Secretariat had prepared, although further improvements were still necessary. He would be grateful for additional information on the establishment of a section on capacity-building within the Social Development Division, since capacity-building was related to both the social and economic fields. Such a section should perhaps be located in another part of the organizational structure.

25. Mr. GODLEY (United States of America) said that, since the regional commissions did not have unique and compelling missions, their programme activities often duplicated those of other international organizations. The commissions should focus their activities on programmes that provided practical benefits to their members, especially those from developing countries, and eliminate or scale back activities that were not unique or offered little value added to their regions. The number of intergovernmental meetings and publications that regional commissions generated should be reduced to the minimum needed for coordination. In general, significant savings could be made in regional commission resources devoted to servicing conferences, hiring consultants and staff travel.

26. The budgets of the regional commissions could be reduced in the range of 25 per cent without adversely affecting programme delivery and services. In that regard, the United Nations should provide clearer explanations from the programming viewpoint regarding what could and should be done by the regional commissions that could not be done from Headquarters or by another international organization. A more holistic approach was required to evaluate relevance, responsiveness and cost-effectiveness.

27. With respect to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), its budget totalled $78.4 million and the Commission proposed a staff of 608, 226 Professionals and 382 General Service staff. His delegation did not support the proposals for additional posts because it believed that the functions of the posts proposed could and should be absorbed within the Commission's existing staffing table. Moreover, in order to reduce meeting expenses, the policy-making bodies of ECA should meet biennially like those of the other regional commissions.

28. The review of the ECA budget had identified areas of overlap and duplication. For example, some activities of subprogramme 1 duplicated activities of other agencies and other ECA programmes, such as trade development and statistical and information systems development. There also appeared to be duplication between the activities of subprogramme 2 and those of other agencies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Trade Centre and the World Bank. With respect to subprogramme 5, many projects appeared to duplicate the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Therefore, that subprogramme should be abolished. In addition to eliminating duplication, rationalization could also be achieved in the Commission's work programme by giving priority to subprogrammes in such areas as development administration and management, infrastructural and structural transformation and women in development, areas in which ECA had performed unique and useful functions which should be encouraged.

29. Mr. FATTAH (Egypt) said that Egypt had advocated decentralization in order to strengthen the functioning of the regional commissions. The resources that were allocated to the regional commissions under the proposed programme budget were insufficient and, in view of the many reductions in extrabudgetary resources, decentralization would be impossible to implement if that trend continued. Africa had made considerable progress in the economic field, where ECA played a very crucial role. Moreover, support should continue to be given

to the work of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP).

30. Mr. AKPLOGAN (Benin) said that his delegation was concerned at the decline in extrabudgetary resources received by ECA, which would adversely affect the execution of the Commission's programmes. The Fifth Committee should consider redressing that situation by recommending an increase in the level of resources proposed in the proposed programme budget, in view of the scope of the outstanding problems and the activities being undertaken to solve the crisis facing the continent. In view of the importance of ECA for regional cooperation activities, the Commission should receive adequate resources to enable it to carry out its work.

31. Mr. ZENNA (Ethiopia) said that Africa's economic situation was worsening. Trade and investments had declined while the debt burden, population growth rates and poverty had increased. ECA, the principal United Nations agency in Africa since 1958, had greatly contributed to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Development, to the activities of the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa and of the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa as well as to the implementation of the Abuja Declaration. He was disturbed to learn that ECA did not have sufficient resources to deal with the serious problems facing Africa and felt that the level of such resources should be increased considerably. He agreed with the Advisory Committee that the causes for the decline in extrabudgetary resources should be identified in order to find a solution to that situation.

32. ECA should continue to be governed by the provisions enacted by the General Assembly concerning the holding of sessions away from the established headquarters. In that regard, the conference servicing capacity at the Commission's headquarters should be increased and the proposed two new posts of electrical engineer and mechanical engineer at the P-3 level and the three additional posts at the local level would be the minimum required to provide technical maintenance and support for the newly constructed conference facilities in Addis Ababa.

33. Moreover, while his delegation understood the Advisory Committee's opinion that, as a result of technological advances, travel expenditure could be reduced, it wondered to what extent Africa had access to such technologies.

34. Mr. DJACTA (Algeria) endorsed the comments made by the representative of Uganda and expressed his country's particular concern at the decline in extrabudgetary resources for ECA.

35. Mr. MONGELLA (United Republic of Tanzania) endorsed the Advisory Committee's view that the administrative efficiency of ECA should be improved and urged the Secretary-General to pay special attention to that problem. His delegation was particularly concerned at the decline in extrabudgetary resources received by ECA. In view of the multisectoral nature of Africa's problems, programmes tended to have a multisectoral approach and at first glance the complementarity of tasks could be mistaken for duplication. The proposed programmes were adequate and the Commission's work would have a more concrete

impact if sufficient resources were made available and ECA adequately carried out its supervisory and administrative functions.

36. Ms. BUERGO (Cuba) said that her delegation recognized the great importance for the African continent of the work of ECA, particularly in view of the difficult economic conditions currently being experienced by African countries, which should receive maximum attention. Accordingly she was concerned by the decline in resources under the proposed budget, since that might not allow implementation of planned activities.

37. She took note with satisfaction of the continued support over the biennium for the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning.

38. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said that his delegation would welcome the adoption by the General Assembly of the suggestion by the representative of Benin that a decision should be taken to substantially increase budget resources for ECA so that it would not be so reliant on extrabudgetary resources, which were unpredictable and were not always available when needed. The ratio of budgetary to extrabudgetary resources was almost 1:10, an infelicitous state of affairs. He agreed that it would be necessary to hold meetings to consider various questions; in the case of ECA, the General Assembly itself had recognized the critical situation of Africa and the need for ongoing dialogue. He trusted that theoretical benchmarks would not be used to judge the frequency of meetings of the Economic Commission for Africa.

39. Mr. HALBWACHS (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the programme of work of ECA had been considered and adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers and that all the activities included in the budget were supported by corresponding mandates. With regard to the distribution of resources among subprogrammes, there was no automatic correlation between levels of resources and prioritization. The level of resources reflected, rather, the volume of work and the number of mandates. If a comparison was made of the distribution of resources for the biennium 1994-1995 and those proposed for the upcoming biennium it could be seen that subprogrammes 2 and 3, which were high priority, had proportionately more resources in the biennium 1996-1997 than in the current biennium.

40. With reference to the comments made regarding the structure of ECA, the new Executive Secretary had assumed his functions after the proposed programme budget had been prepared, but was undertaking a series of restructuring exercises, and there was a possibility that changes would be introduced along the lines of many of the comments made on the rationalization of the administrative structure, and that there would be greater emphasis on the allocation of resources to programmes.

41. The decline in extrabudgetary resources was not only a phenomenon affecting ECA, most of the offices receiving UNDP technical cooperation funds were also affected.

42. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said that it would be useful for the Director of the Budget Division to indicate whether, and, if so, when, the General Assembly would be informed of the measures proposed by the Executive Secretary.

43. Mr. HALBWACHS (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the measures were in the course of adoption and that the General Assembly would certainly be informed. Although it was not yet known when, that would occur as specific approval of the Assembly was required.

44. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had completed its first reading of section 15 and that it would be referred to informal consultations for further consideration and appropriate action.

Section 16. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

45. Mr. SHIN (Republic of Korea) said that the proposed programme budget for ESCAP for the biennium 1996-1997 reflected a 0.45 per cent increase over the previous biennium. He welcomed the 2.4 per cent increase in the budget for the programme of work, which would contribute to efficient programme delivery under programme 31 of the medium-term plan.

46. He wished to draw attention to the fact that the percentage of the total population of the Asia and Pacific region living below the poverty line had reached 56.1 per cent in 1992. Special attention should be paid to that serious situation in the proposed programme budget. Accordingly, he supported the proposal to establish one P-5 post for the Chief of the Rural Development Section and to redeploy one P-4 post and one P-2 post from programme support and one P-3 post from subprogramme 1 to strengthen substantive activities under subprogramme 3. He welcomed the endorsement of that proposal by the Advisory Committee.

47. Lastly, he noted that extrabudgetary resources funded by UNDP and UNFPA had decreased significantly in the case of ESCAP, in particular for subprogramme 3. In that regard he pointed out that the figures did not reflect the actual situation of poverty in the Asia and Pacific region.

48. Mrs. ARAGON (Philippines) said that her delegation supported the budget estimates under section 16 and hoped that the section would receive the support of Member States when the budget was adopted. The regional commissions had an extremely important role, in which connection she recalled the ministerial declaration issued in New York on 29 September 1995 by the Group of 77 recognizing the increasingly important role of the regional commissions in providing assistance to the countries of each region, developing countries in particular, in the implementation of the various recommendations of the major conferences on development. Accordingly, she trusted that adequate resources would be allocated for the work of the regional commissions.

49. Mr. JU Kuilin (China) said that the economy of the region of Asia and the Pacific was very active and that major changes had taken place. ESCAP had done an excellent job of promoting the economic and social development of the region and would continue to do so. In particular, owing to the ongoing reform of the United Nations, certain tasks previously carried out at Headquarters had recently been delegated to the regional commissions which, in consequence, were becoming more important. For that reason there was a need to strengthen various aspects of the work of ESCAP. His delegation would welcome the allocation of additional resources to ESCAP, and, in particular, would like to see poverty

alleviation and aid to the least developed countries included among ESCAP's priorities.

50. He fully shared the opinions expressed in paragraphs V.26 and V.27 of the report of the Advisory Committee. He supported the allocation of additional resources and the establishment of the new posts and hoped that the programmes would continue to be strengthened in the future.

51. Mr. GODLEY (United States of America) said that there were several areas of duplication and overlap in the work of ESCAP, that might be scaled back or eliminated without any adverse impact on the programme of work of the Commission.

52. Since the Commission currently met annually, consideration might be given to the possibility of biennializing its meetings. Moreover, Executive direction and management might be scaled back by a reduction in the number of General Service posts.

53. The goals and activities of the subprogramme for regional cooperation were too broad and ill defined. If those goals were more clearly articulated, the regional cooperation programme could be cut back, since a large part of that programme seemed to duplicate the activities of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Furthermore, there was no doubt that the statistics subprogramme could be rationalized by a reduction in the number of publications and meetings.

54. Much of the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries subprogramme, which focused on analysis and assistance in areas of interest to the least developed countries, duplicated the work of UNCTAD and probably also overlapped with the transport and communications subprogramme of ESCAP itself.

55. Programme support was overstaffed and was, perhaps, not making efficient use of its resources. The fact that the Commission was devoting 50 per cent of its budget to servicing meetings probably meant that it was holding too many of them.

56. Mr. CHINVANNO (Thailand) said that ESCAP had played an important and useful role in the development of the region and should be strengthened. His delegation therefore supported the level of funding requested by the Secretary-General.

57. Mr. ATIYANTO (Indonesia) associated himself with the delegations which supported the budget estimates for ESCAP. It was advisable to increase funding since the demands placed on the Secretariat had increased as a result of the increase in membership and the expanded geographical scope of the Commission.

58. Mr. HALBWACHS (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), referring to the number of meetings held by ESCAP, pointed out that, until recently, the structure of the Commission had included nine main bodies and seven special committees. That structure had been considerably simplified and, at present,

there were five committees and two bodies. That represented an important achievement which should be recognized.

59. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Commission had completed its first reading of section 16 of the proposed programme budget and had decided to refer it to informal consultations for further consideration and appropriate action.

Section 17: Economic Commission for Europe

60. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Russian Federation) said that his delegation attached great importance to the activities of the Commission, including assistance to countries with economies in transition. Unfortunately, the urgent nature of the work of ECE was not adequately reflected in the proposed programme budget. Neither was there any consideration of the fact that, in recent years, the Commission had taken numerous measures to increase the efficiency of its work; that had caused the Advisory Committee to observe, in paragraph V.3 of its report, that ECE was the only regional commission which had made great progress in improving its organizational structure.

61. The allocation of resources to the Commission had remained virtually "frozen" in real terms for 15 years despite the fact that its membership had increased from 34 to 55, in other words, by over 60 per cent, and despite the emergence of new obstacles and problems related to the radical changes in the economic development models of the new democracies of the Commonwealth of Independent States. In that regard, there was a question whether the Organization applied the same standards to the interests of different regions.

62. Questions also arose with regard to the allocation of resources. In the first place, it was not clear why it was proposed to increase expenditure on administrative and general services and executive direction and management and at the same time reduce in real terms the funding for the programme of work. In the opinion of his delegation, the reverse should be the case. If one examined the breakdown of the programmes, it was difficult to agree to the reduction in resources for programmes such as those on energy, industry and technology and agriculture and timber. It would be helpful if the Secretariat could submit additional information in that regard.

63. His delegation supported the establishment of two new posts, as recommended by the Advisory Committee. At the same time, it wished to draw the attention of the Secretariat to the need to adopt measures for the timely filling of vacancies since, as indicated in paragraph V.9 of the report of the Advisory Committee, the vacancy rate was still excessive.

64. Finally, his delegation wished to ask the Secretariat if further information was available with regard to the matter referred to in paragraph V.33 of the report of the Advisory Committee, which stated that ECE would receive additional extrabudgetary resources from UNDP.

65. Mr. GODLEY (United States of America) said that certain areas of the work performed by ECE overlapped with the work of other institutions and could be scaled back or eliminated without any adverse impact on its programme of work. With regard to the Environment subprogramme, savings could be achieved by

reducing the demands on the ECE secretariat and discarding non-priority tasks such as the servicing of certain environmental conventions, a duty that could be transferred to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). With regard to the Transport subprogramme, savings could be achieved by reducing the number of meetings in that field.

66. With regard to the Statistics subprogramme, ECE had a comparative advantage since statistical information and better means of collecting it were urgently needed by the countries in transition in Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, savings could be achieved by reducing the number of intergovernmental meetings, decreasing the analytical work on members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), whose economies were already studied in depth in that institution, and issuing certain publications less frequently. The activities of the Trade facilitation subprogramme could be centralized rather than pursued at the regional level as at present, which simply duplicated the work of UNCTAD and the International Trade Centre (ITC).

67. As far as the Economic analysis subprogramme was concerned, ECE also had a comparative advantage since the countries in transition in Eastern Europe needed particularly rigorous economic analysis. There, too, savings could be achieved by taking the same action as suggested for the Statistics subprogramme. Although the Energy subprogramme was very important for the economies in transition in Eastern Europe, it was not a priority area for ECE and savings could be achieved by reducing the number of working group meetings, workshops and sectoral reports.

68. Referring to the Development of international trade subprogramme, he said that, although assistance to Eastern Europe in the development of trade systems had been useful, organizations such as ITC, UNCTAD and WTO were far more competent in that sphere. Finally, OECD and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) could absorb much of the work of the Agriculture and timber subprogramme.

69. Mr. ABELIAN (Armenia) and Mr. MIHAI (Romania), endorsing the statement by the representative of the Russian Federation, asked the Secretariat to clarify the matter of the $3 million which UNDP was to contribute to ECE, and supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation regarding the establishment of the two new posts proposed by the Secretary-General.

70. Mr. GOUMENNY (Ukraine) said he was puzzled by the proposals to make cuts in priority areas of the programme of work of ECE, namely the subprogrammes devoted to the environment, statistics, economic analysis, trade facilitation and transport; activities under those subprogrammes were vitally important for the countries in transition in Eastern Europe. In addition, he noted with concern the proposals for reductions in the resources allocated to subprogrammes 8 (Industry and technology), 6 (Energy) and 9 (Agriculture and timber), and asked for further clarification in that regard.

71. He associated himself with the remarks that had been made regarding the transfer of resources from UNDP to ECE and endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendation on the establishment of two new posts.

72. Mr. CHUDY (Poland) said that his delegation would comment on the recommendation regarding the establishment of two new posts during informal consultations.

73. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, with regard to the recommendation concerning the establishment of two new posts, in paragraph V.33 of the Advisory Committee's report, the obvious way to proceed would be for the Secretary-General's representatives to ask for more detailed information from UNDP.

74. Mr. HALBWACHS (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that he would liaise with UNDP and ECE to obtain additional details regarding the transfer of the $3 million.

75. With regard to the overall reduction in resources allocated to the programme of work, he said that the cuts had been occasioned by two factors: first the decline in external publication costs and, second, the redistribution of a number of posts in the programme of work.

76. The justification for the increase in resources allocated to the Executive direction and management programme could be found in paragraph 17.11 of the proposed programme budget. The increase in programme support resources was in line with the commitment to improve office automation, which would have a positive impact on all the programmes.

77. Finally, with regard to the redistribution of programme of work resources, all he could say was that the concentration of resources in subprogrammes 1 to 5 was in keeping with the established priorities.

78. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh) said he would appreciate further clarification as to whether the $3 million to be transferred from UNDP to ECE would come from the resources earmarked for the Programme's regional activities.

79. The CHAIRMAN said that, as indicated by the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division, information on that matter would be provided at a later date. He took it that the Committee had concluded its first reading of section 17 of the draft programme budget and wished to refer it to informal consultations for further consideration and appropriate action.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
18th meeting
held on
Thursday, 2 November 1995
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VILCHEZ ASHER (Nicaragua)

later: Mr. AMARI (Tunisia)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 116: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997 (continued) (A/50/6 (Vols. I and II), A/50/7 and A/50/16)

First reading (continued)

Section 18. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Section 19. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Section 20. Regular programme of technical cooperation

Section 18. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

1. Ms. MONTAÑO-DURÁN (Bolivia), speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, stressed the importance which the Group attached to the efforts of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to promote economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean and to the Commission's valuable contribution to the reform of the region's economies. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean belonged to the category of middle- and low-income countries, and it was therefore essential to strengthen the regional institutions that contributed to the development of the region's economies.

2. The Group considered that the percentage of resources spent on the salaries of the skilled staff of ECLAC was fully justified, since at a time when great importance was attached to intellectual and creative work, the analytical and forward-looking studies undertaken by ECLAC were valuable and the data which it processed useful.

3. The Group wished to express its concern over the reduction in the extrabudgetary resources received by all the regional commissions and, in that connection, supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation contained in paragraph V.10 of its report. ECLAC had achieved significant savings through, inter alia, the successful renegotiation of lease agreements and the increase in productivity following the introduction of new technologies. The savings thus realized, however, should not result in a reduction of resources but rather in their redeployment to other activities which were currently under-funded.

4. The Group regretted the failure to provide for an additional P-4 post to deal with drug control matters and requested that the necessary resources should be allocated for that purpose. On the other hand, it welcomed the establishment of a P-4 post for the follow-up of the activities related to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. It was important to allocate additional resources to the subregional headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain. It noted, moreover, that ECLAC was the only regional commission with limited conference facilities, a fact which should be taken into account when setting the future priorities of the Organization.

5. Mr. GODLEY (United States of America) said that his delegation had identified several areas of duplication in the activities of ECLAC and believed that the Commission's budget could be reduced by about 25 per cent. The programmes of food and agriculture, economic development, international trade and development finance, natural resources and energy, environment and human settlements, and social development appeared to overlap with projects of other United Nations agencies and of ECLAC itself and could therefore be scaled back. The activities of the economic and social planning programme and of the industrial, scientific and technological development programme should be abolished. Similarly, many of the projects of subregional activities in Mexico and Central America and in the Caribbean should be scaled back or eliminated for the same reasons.

6. Mr. AMARI (Tunisia) said that his delegation supported the establishment of a new P-4 post for the follow-up of the activities related to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, since it attached great importance to the Conference's work.

7. Ms. BUERGO (Cuba) said that her delegation attached great importance to the work of ECLAC and, in particular, to its publications programme. It noted with concern the reduction in the resources allocated to the programmes of environment and human settlements and population and social development and wondered whether the resources allocated were sufficient to discharge the Commission's broad mandates in those fields. She supported the establishment of the new P-4 post for the follow-up of the activities related to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and regretted the failure to include in the proposed programme budget the post related to drug control activities.

8. Mr. JU Kuilin (China), referring to the statements made by certain delegations which had deplored the duplication and overlapping of activities that allegedly took place in the various regional commissions, said that the countries of each region were in the best position to determine which activities should be carried out by their respective regional commissions. More convincing arguments were therefore needed to justify reductions in the proposed programme budget on those grounds.

9. Mr. RAMLAL (Trinidad and Tobago) and Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) expressed agreement with the statement made by the representative of China.

10. Mr. FATTAH (Egypt) said that his delegation fully supported the statements made by previous speakers and reiterated its support for ECLAC. It also wished to stress the importance of allocating additional resources to the Commission. The Egyptian delegation welcomed the decentralization of the work of the regional commissions which would enable them to implement their policies and programmes with the resources allocated to them. Unfortunately, there had been a significant reduction of those resources, and particularly of extrabudgetary resources, which meant that the results envisaged could not be achieved.

11. Mr. MARCONDES DE CARVALHO (Brazil) said that the immense prestige which ECLAC enjoyed in the region was well known to all. It seemed to be forgotten that, since its establishment 47 years previously, ECLAC had been playing a

critical role in the struggle to achieve economic growth and genuine development and that, since that time, it had undertaken a wide range of highly effective projects and programmes aimed at helping the region to overcome some of the structural problems which were deeply rooted in the continent. It had also made a valuable contribution to the development in the region of a progressive school of thought in economic and social matters.

12. But even though considerable progress had been achieved, much still remained to be done. Despite the recent increase in economic activity in Latin America and the Caribbean and the relative stability of prices, serious problems persisted, many of them social in nature. A large part of the population continued to await the tangible benefits of economic recovery and growth. All the countries of the region had full confidence in the valuable work of ECLAC and, in pursuing their development activities, had come to rely on the valuable cooperation of the Commission. It appeared as though some delegations overlooked that fact.

13. The delegation of Brazil fully supported the statement made by Bolivia on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and could not agree to any reduction in the budget without account being taken of the consequences which such a step would have on mandates and programmes. Throughout the world, the trend was towards local activities, an area in which regional commissions played a very important role. The attempt to reduce the resources of ECLAC appeared to be the result of a highly selective political initiative which was completely unacceptable to the delegation of Brazil. Much remained to be done in the region, and it was therefore necessary to recognize the work of ECLAC and to continue to give it every support, since to do otherwise would deprive Latin America and the Caribbean of the valuable assistance which it had been receiving from the Commission.

14. Mr. DIPP (Dominican Republic) said that his delegation supported the statements made by the representatives of Bolivia, Cuba and other countries on the need to strengthen ECLAC, which had been engaged in very effective work, particularly in the Caribbean through its office in Trinidad and Tobago. He also supported the recommendation made by the Advisory Committee that the P-4 post should be maintained for ECLAC. The Commission's publications programme and its visits to the various countries were extremely important in order to maintain coordination and to disseminate information, activities which were of great value to other countries. He therefore supported all the recommendations that, instead of reducing the budget of ECLAC, adequate resources should be allocated to the Commission to enable it to continue its valuable programme of assistance and dissemination of information in the various countries.

15. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), referring to the views expressed by some delegations that ECLAC was spending too much on unnecessary activities involving the compilation of data, organization of meetings and sponsoring of information sessions, said that those were precisely the activities for which it had been created by the Economic and Social Council and by Member States. The role of the regional commissions was to serve as centres for the exchange of ideas in order to assist in the development of member countries. In the original mandates, all Member States had entrusted ECLAC and the other regional commissions with the task of undertaking or sponsoring research and studies

aimed at resolving economic and technological problems and at contributing to the development of the countries of the respective regions; they had also mandated them to undertake or to sponsor activities of compilation, analysis and dissemination of statistical data in the fields of economics and technology. That was precisely the mission which ECLAC was required to accomplish.

16. In preparing the budget proposal, the Secretary-General had used the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, which had already been adopted by the General Assembly and all Member States. Moreover, ECLAC had reviewed the programme of work and all delegations had taken part in that exercise, including those which now argued that ECLAC was performing unnecessary tasks. In 1995 the programme structure and resource requirements for ECLAC had been submitted through the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), which had reviewed the relevant section, including those parts which might involve duplication and overlapping of duties or unnecessary work. Following the programme analysis by the Economic and Social Council and CPC, CPC had recommended to the General Assembly that it should approve the programme narrative of section 18, which included the 14 subprogrammes. The Secretary-General had been guided by those decisions and consequently, there was no reason to eliminate any activities unless the General Assembly expressly decided to do so and indicated that certain elements of the programme of work were unnecessary. The Secretary-General did not believe that to be the case.

17. With regard to the observation that resources could be cut substantially without detriment to the programme of work of ECLAC, he pointed out that the Secretary-General had proposed the budget on the basis of the minimum requirements to carry out all mandated activities, and that proposal had been accepted by all the members of the regional commission. Unless the General Assembly decided that some elements of the programmes were unnecessary, it would not be possible to make any significant reduction in the resources without jeopardizing the programme of work.

18. With regard to the subprogrammes on food and agriculture, economic and social planning, industrial, scientific and technological development, international trade and development finance, natural resources and energy, and social development, it would be misleading to state that any of them duplicated work done by other bodies and that ECLAC should not be involved in such activities. All the activities included in the subprogrammes had been reviewed and approved by the Commission. It was true that ECLAC was not the only body working in those areas and it should therefore work in close collaboration and consultation with other pertinent United Nations agencies and programmes; as noted in paragraph 18.4 of the proposed programme budget, ECLAC would continue liaison and cooperation with FAO, Habitat, UNIDO, UNEP, UNCTAD, ILO and other organs and departments.

19. The International Trade Centre (ITC) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) carried out activities related to trade and the social development of women, respectively, but they had very specific tasks. They were essentially executing agencies; for example, the mission of UNIFEM was to provide resources for projects pertaining to women. Thus, there was no basis for stating that ECLAC performed the same duties as UNIFEM; rather, its work was complementary to that carried out by UNIFEM.

20. Since the creation of the United Nations, the regional commissions had played an essential role in the Organization, which had always tried to delegate programme execution powers to them, since they were best suited to provide Member States with services in the area of economic and social development.

21. With regard to the drug programme, he said that it was considered to be global in scope, and was the responsibility of the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). The regional commissions received support from UNDCP, but were not deemed to be responsible for drug-related activities.

22. Mr. Amari (Tunisia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

23. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee had completed its first reading of section 18 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, and that it wished to hold informal consultations on that section, with a view to taking appropriate action.

Section 19. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

24. Mr. FATTAH (Egypt) said that the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was one of the commissions that had been most affected by an unstable situation, inasmuch as its headquarters had been moved from Beirut to Baghdad and from Baghdad to Amman and would probably be moved away from Amman also. All those moves had affected the work of its staff. His delegation was pleased to note that, despite all the difficulties, the Commission had carried out many activities. His delegation also welcomed the appointment of the new Executive Secretary of ESCWA.

25. The Commission needed support, particularly in the area of environmental protection, since following the Gulf War, there had been serious environmental pollution in the region.

26. His delegation also expressed concern over the tendency to reduce the resources allocated to ESCWA for the future.

27. Mr. ASHABI (Yemen) endorsed the comments made by the representative of Egypt, and said that he shared his concern regarding the financial situation of the Commission; the many moves it had had to make jeopardized the assistance it could provide to other countries. The Commission did not have the necessary resources for the relocation to its new headquarters, which would probably be once again in Beirut.

28. Yemen depended on ESCWA and placed great hopes in it, since it had been of great assistance in the past. A number of sectoral projects were still under way in the context of the development plans of Yemen and other countries of the region. He therefore considered it necessary to continue to provide ESCWA with support and resources, so that it could carry out its work.

29. The regional commissions represented one of the principal sources of funding for development activities. One of the main roles to be played by ESCWA in the future would be in the area of development, including support for the

structures of the developing countries in general and those of the least developed countries in particular.

30. Mr. GODLEY (United States of America) said that, as in the case of the other regional commissions, his delegation had identified several areas of duplication and overlap in the programme of work of ESCWA. Once again, his delegation proposed a reduction of resources of some 25 per cent which, in its view, would not have an adverse impact on the Commission's work. In addition, it believed that some programmes should be scaled back or eliminated.

31. First, although water resources were important to the region, it was difficult to believe that the resources devoted to the region in subprogramme 1 could not be scaled back. In the view of his delegation, work on the regional power-generation network would be more appropriately conducted in the private sector.

32. Second, his delegation questioned whether the activities under subprogramme 2, which involved mostly analytical work on human development issues, including those concerned with the provision of shelter, women and the alleviation of poverty, contributed any further to the ongoing work in other bodies of the Economic and Social Council. His delegation therefore proposed that that subprogramme should be eliminated.

33. His delegation believed that the activities under subprogramme 3, which devoted considerable resources to the evaluation of the prospects for various regional projects and the development of statistical indicators, could be significantly scaled back.

34. Subprogramme 4 should also be eliminated, since its focus on evaluation and the formulation of recommendations on macroeconomic policies duplicated the work of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other institutions.

35. Finally, his delegation was concerned about the level of programme support for ESCWA. The proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 provided for $18.5 million and 163 posts, almost half of the Commission's resources. In comparison, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), which had a considerably larger membership, allocated only 8.8 per cent of its budget to programme support. ESCWA was grossly overstaffed, and was unlikely to be using resources efficiently.

36. Mr. DJACTA (Algeria) said that ESCWA and the pertinent section of the budget were particularly important to his country. He was therefore entirely in agreement with the level of resources and means allocated for its different mandates and activities and he appealed to the Committee to bear in mind the needs of the region. He trusted that the question of resources would be resolved in informal consultations.

37. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the budget for ESCWA had been prepared on the basis of the programme of work approved in the medium-term plan. Under the leadership of its new Executive Secretary, the Commission had made an effort to reorient the main areas of priority in its programme of work and to follow a

thematic approach in order to avoid excessive fragmentation of programmes. The budget therefore focused on activities in five subprogrammes, which had been carefully reviewed by all States members of the Commission and had received their firm support.

38. With regard to subprogramme 2, Improvement of the quality of life, he said that it was a priority activity for ESCWA. Although there might appear to be some duplication of effort with respect to certain aspects or activities, that did not mean that the subprogramme was unnecessary. Moreover, it enjoyed the support of the members of the Commission.

39. That also applied to subprogramme 4, Regional development and global changes, the elimination of which had been proposed. It had received the unanimous support of the members of ESCWA. The Secretariat attached great importance to regional development and to efforts by States members of ESCWA to adapt to global changes.

40. It had also been argued that, compared with ECE, ESCWA was not using its resources efficiently because it had submitted a budget of $18.5 million for programme support activities, while ECE, whose headquarters was in Geneva, allocated only 8.8 per cent of its budget to such activities. That totally erroneous conclusion was the result of a simplistic analysis and could hinder the budget preparation process.

41. Because its headquarters was in Geneva, all programme support expenditures of ECE were borne by the United Nations Office in that city. ESCWA, on the other hand, did not receive any help and was solely responsible for all costs relating, inter alia, to general services, purchasing, buildings management, security, conference services, finance, and computer systems. The assistance that ECE received from the United Nations Office in Geneva totalled more than $14 million, an amount that was included in the budget of the United Nations Office. ECE thus spent more than $15 million for programme support and it was therefore incorrect to say that ESCWA had a larger programme support budget.

42. The CHAIRMAN took it that the Committee had completed the first reading of section 19 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 and had decided to transmit the section to informal consultations for further discussion and the adoption of appropriate action.

Section 20. Regular programme of technical cooperation

43. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's recommendations on section 20 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 (Regular programme of technical cooperation), said that not only the United Nations allocated part of its budget for technical cooperation activities; nearly all the specialized agencies of the United Nations system did so as well.

44. The level of resources to be provided under section 20 had been determined by the General Assembly several years earlier and since that time it had been adjusted solely to take account of inflation. Reports on technical cooperation projects were submitted to the Executive Board of the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP) and the internal and external auditing of the accounts was carried out in connection with the auditing of the accounts of United Nations operations involving the different implementing and executing entities.

45. The Advisory Committee recommended that the monitoring, evaluation and control of the resources allocated to section 20 should be strengthened in each of the implementing and executing entities and was transmitting the estimates for section 20 to the General Assembly for appropriate action.

46. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh) said that his delegation had strong reservations concerning the budget appropriations for the programme. Technical cooperation in itself entailed considerable duplication and overlapping. One wondered to what extent central coordination by the United Nations system was appropriate in view of the existence of UNDP, which provided catalytic support to all Member States. Various specialized agencies also implemented independent technical cooperation programmes. Appropriations of up to $40 million had been included for sectoral, regional and subregional advisory services but there was no background information in support of the programme. Until such time as the programmes that were to benefit from technical cooperation or advisory services could be identified, advance approval could not be given for appropriations in the amount of $40 million.

47. Moreover, short-term advisory services were not always useful to the countries receiving them. They were generally provided on the initiative of particular special interest groups and rarely had any connection with the country's basic programme. Until such time as a link could be established between short-term advisory services and national or regional programmes, the appropriation of resources could not be approved. His delegation would be grateful if the Secretariat could provide at least a minimum outline of the programmes to which technical cooperation or advisory services would be provided.

48. Mr. MONGELLA (United Republic of Tanzania) said his delegation attached special importance to section 20 of the proposed programme budget and was convinced that the activities undertaken would be conducive to the development of the countries concerned. As indicated in the Advisory Committee's report, the Secretariat should provide the information needed to rationalize the programme and enhance its effectiveness. It might appear from an examination of the three main types of technical cooperation that the effects of short-term advisory services was ephemeral but his delegation considered that, on the contrary, such services could have a lasting impact. With regard to field projects and training activities, the majority of developing countries needed substantial support in those areas. On that understanding, his delegation supported the programme and took account of the conclusions of CPC in that regard.

49. Mr. GODLEY (United States of America) recognized and supported the important contribution of the United Nations system in the area of technical assistance and encouraged it to continue its work. He had, however, some objections with regard to the United Nations regular programme of technical cooperation. The resources allocated to that section of the budget consisted essentially of unprogrammed funds channelled into various United Nations

activities with a view to accomplishing unspecified technical cooperation tasks. As the regular programme of technical cooperation was financed by assessed contributions, the expenditures included in the programme budget of the United Nations should be clearly specified and justified and the funds should not be used to finance activities that were not specified in the regular budget. His delegation endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee regarding the monitoring, evaluation and control of those resources.

50. In addition, the regular programme of technical cooperation should be gradually eliminated from the regular budget and financed exclusively through voluntary contributions. As a first step, he proposed that the resource base should be specified and the levels allocated to the programme reduced.

51. Mr. MIRMOHAMMAD (Islamic Republic of Iran) asked for clarification on two points. First, despite the great importance of economic development to developing countries, the resources allocated to the human rights programme in the proposed programme budget greatly exceeded those allocated to other activities. Second, in paragraph 20.22 it was stated that the activities under the technical cooperation programme were in support of the objectives of subprogramme 3 of programme 35, Promotion and protection of human rights, of the medium-term plan, as revised. However, as was known, the revision of programme 35 had not been carried out in accordance with the relevant mandates and had therefore not been approved by the Committee for Programme and Coordination or by the General Assembly.

52. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the programme of technical cooperation had formed part of the programme budget of the United Nations since the establishment of the Organization. As early as its first session, the General Assembly had agreed, in resolution 58, that the activities in question should be financed from the regular budget. At its third session, the General Assembly had decided to expand the programme and to appropriate the resources that would allow the Secretary-General to implement economic development programmes. The Assembly had decided that the promotion of conditions of economic and social progress and development was one of the principal objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, and that the lack of expert personnel and the lack of technical organization were among the factors which impeded the economic development of Member States. In the light of Chapters IX and X of the Charter, it had decided to appropriate the funds necessary to enable the Secretary-General to send experts to organize training programmes. Since then, the regular budget of the United Nations had systematically included a section devoted to such activities.

53. As had been noted by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, all the specialized agencies followed the same procedure of including appropriations, charged against assessed contributions, in their regular budget for technical cooperation activities. Technical cooperation should not depend solely on the voluntary contributions of donor countries. All Member States should make contributions to the programme on the basis of a scale of assessments. Initially, the technical cooperation programme had been considered on a project-by-project basis by the Economic and Social Council. Later on, the General Assembly had taken the view that authority should be delegated to the Secretary-General and in 1969 a new budgetary and administrative procedure had been

adopted for the implementation of the programme and the Secretary-General had been empowered to authorize individual projects. The Secretary-General had in turn delegated that authority to the executive heads of the implementing and executing entities.

54. As shown in table 20.2 of section 20, appropriations were distributed among 12 fields of activity. In the case of the human rights programme, appropriations had been increased in the biennium 1994-1995 because of the Vienna Conference, but in the next biennium the appropriations which had previously been approved would be maintained. Table 20.3 showed the scale of the activities and the number of experts required. With regard to paragraph 20.22, the first revision of the medium-term plan had been approved by the General Assembly in 1992 and the version submitted in 1994, which had not yet been approved, had not been used in the preparation of the proposed programme budget.

55. Project implementation was not a Secretariat initiative but occurred in response to the requests and needs of Member States. The Secretariat did not prepare projects at random but, given that the requirements of Member States might change during the period of execution, it was considered more appropriate not to compile a list of projects at the beginning of the biennium but to allow the Secretariat the necessary flexibility to respond more effectively to changes in the requirements of Member States.

56. Mr. HANSON (Canada) said that his delegation fully supported technical cooperation for development but, as had already been noted, the programme had been operating on essentially the same basis since 1969 and the time had come for a fundamental review.

57. Resources were appropriated to the section solely for the purpose of being transferred to other sections. That was a cumbersome and unnecessarily complex procedure and did not make for transparency or give the General Assembly the responsibility and control that it should always exercise when dealing with regular budget resources. The proposed programme budget had little to say about the specific activities to be funded. As technical cooperation was provided in response to specific requests by Governments, which could not be predicted in advance, it was only possible to indicate areas of activity and to give a rough breakdown of appropriations. Those general indications were, however, insufficient in the case of regular budget resources financed from assessed contributions. In all other sections of the budget, details were rightly expected in advance concerning the type of activities to be undertaken and the resources to be used for the purpose. Only in section 20 were Member States requested to contribute almost $50 million on the basis of very general indications regarding the purpose for which the funds were to be used.

58. There was a section in the regular budget for each of the organizations receiving funds under the technical cooperation programme. It would be much more appropriate, and consistent with minimum standards of transparency and accountability, if the budget section corresponding to each department or organ were to specify the proposed technical cooperation activities to be financed from the regular budget where such financing was appropriate. The General Assembly would then be in a better position to exercise the necessary control.

59. The CHAIRMAN took it that the Committee had completed the first reading of section 20 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 and had decided to transmit the section to informal consultations for further discussion and the adoption of appropriate action.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.